A COMPLETE COMMENTARY
ON THE QUR’AN

Juz’ by Juz’ — All Thirty Parts

Approximately 133,000 words

Drawing on classical tafsir (Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, az-Zamakhshari, Ibn ‘Ashur), authenticated hadith, asbab al-nuzul literature, and modern academic Qur’anic studies — a companion to "The Seerah of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him," correlating seerah events wherever a genuine connection exists

True Faith Institute

A Note on Method

This commentary covers the entire Qur'an, organized by the thirty traditional juz' (parts) into which the text has long been divided for recitation. Completeness, not selective correlation, is the organizing principle here: every juz' receives its own chapter, and every surah and passage within each juz' is addressed at a depth proportionate to its significance, so that nothing in the text is silently skipped.

Within each chapter, exegetical density is mixed and chosen passage by passage rather than fixed by a single method across the whole work. Short, pivotal, theologically or legally dense verses receive close, verse-by-verse or near word-by-word treatment. Longer narrative, legal, or genealogical stretches are addressed as passage-blocks — a representative verse or two quoted, then the argument or story summarized — since exhaustive verse-by-verse treatment of all 6,236 verses at this depth would run to several times the length of this volume. The result aims for complete thematic coverage at a depth of serious explanatory commentary, rather than an exhaustive multi-volume tafsir.

Seerah correlation — explicit connection to events in the companion volume, The Seerah of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, — is noted wherever it genuinely exists in the classical occasions-of-revelation (asbab al-nuzul) literature, but it is not forced onto passages that have no such documented connection; a great deal of the Qur'an, particularly its legal, eschatological, and narrative material concerning earlier prophets, stands on its own rather than tying to a specific seerah episode.

In every chapter, classical tafsir is cited by name (principally Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, az-Zamakhshari, and Ibn 'Ashur), hadith by collection, and modern academic Qur'anic scholarship is noted evenhandedly alongside the classical tradition, including points of genuine, long-documented scholarly and sectarian disagreement rather than papering over them.

This volume was produced with the assistance of AI research and drafting tools, guided and edited by True Faith Institute. As with any work of this scope, readers should treat specific hadith citations, verse numbering, and classical attributions here as a serious first draft requiring a scholar's

independent verification against primary texts before being relied upon for scholarly, educational, or devotional purposes. We welcome corrections.

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Juz’ 1: Surah al-Fatiha 1:1 — Surah al-Baqarah 2:141

Surah al-Fatiha 1:1 through Surah al-Baqarah 2:141

Al-Fatiha, the seven verses that open the Qur'an, together with the first 141 verses of the much longer Surah al-Baqarah, constitute the first of the thirty conventional divisions (ajza', sing. juz') into which the text is divided for purposes of recitation. This division is a later organizational convenience associated with completing recitation of the whole Qur'an across a lunar month, and it carries no inherent thematic significance of its own — the boundary at 2:141 falls in the middle of a continuous argument that carries into the next juz'. Nonetheless, the material gathered here has real coherence: it moves from the liturgical opening supplication of al-Fatiha, through al-Baqarah's programmatic introduction of three human responses to revelation (belief, disbelief, hypocrisy), into the foundational narrative of Adam's creation and vicegerency, through an extended and often polemical engagement with the history of the Children of Israel, and concludes with the reclamation of Abraham as a monotheist predating both the Mosaic and Meccan religious systems. Along the way the text addresses matters of law, covenant, sacred history, and communal identity that would occupy the Medinan community in the years following the Hijra of 622 CE.

Al-Fatiha (1:1-7)

Al-Fatiha is traditionally regarded as revealed in Mecca, and unlike much of what follows in al-Baqarah, it is not associated with any particular historical incident; classical sources do not record an occasion of revelation (sabab al-nuzul) for it, and it is generally understood to function liturgically rather than polemically or legislatively. It bears several honorific titles in the classical tradition, most prominently Umm al-Kitab ("the Mother of the Book") and al-Sab' al-Mathani ("the seven oft-repeated verses"), the latter term drawn from Q15:87 and discussed at length in the exegetical literature, including the commentaries of al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir. Its liturgical centrality is difficult to overstate: it is recited in every unit (rak'ah) of the obligatory five daily prayers, making it, in sheer frequency of utterance, perhaps the most repeated text in Islamic devotional life.

The surah opens: "In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful" (1:1), a formula (the basmalah) that recurs at the head of nearly every subsequent surah and that establishes at the outset the paired divine epithets al-Rahman and al-Rahim, both derived from the root r-h-m ("mercy" or "womb"). Commentators generally distinguish these as denoting, respectively, an encompassing mercy extended to all creation and a more particular mercy reserved for the faithful, though the precise semantic distinction between the two forms has been debated across the exegetical tradition and should not be treated as settled doctrine.

The surah proceeds: "[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds" (1:2), "The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful" (1:3), "Sovereign of the Day of Recompense" (1:4) — a sequence establishing praise, universal lordship, mercy, and eschatological sovereignty before the grammatical subject shifts. Verse 5 marks this pivot: "It is You we worship and You we ask for help," moving from third-person description of God to direct second-person address, a structural hinge that classical commentary treats as dividing the surah into a half of praise and a half of petition. This division draws support from a well-known hadith qudsi transmitted in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, in which Allah is reported to have said: "I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves," responding verse by verse as the worshipper recites — a tradition frequently cited by commentators to explain why al-Fatiha's structure moves from doxology to supplication and why it is deemed indispensable to valid prayer.

The closing petition follows: "Guide us to the straight path - The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray" (1:6-7). Modern academic scholarship, including work associated with the Corpus Coranicum project and studies by Angelika Neuwirth and Nicolai Sinai, has noted formal parallels between al-Fatiha's structure and earlier Jewish and Christian prayer conventions — the movement from praise to petition bears some resemblance to patterns found in psalms and in liturgical forms such as the Kaddish or the Lord's Prayer — while cautioning against overstating direct literary dependence; the resemblance is generally treated as reflecting

shared conventions of ancient Near Eastern devotional language rather than demonstrable borrowing.

Al-Baqarah 2:1-20: Three responses to revelation

Al-Baqarah, by contrast, is Medinan and among the longest surahs in the Qur'an; the portion treated in this chapter (verses 1-141) represents only its opening third. Academic treatments of the Qur'an's compositional history, such as Sinai's historical-critical introduction, characterize long Medinan surahs like al-Baqarah as compilations arranged around thematic clusters — creation narrative, covenant history, legal material — rather than as strictly continuous single-sitting discourses, though scholarly opinion remains divided on the extent to which such surahs reflect single revelatory events versus later redactional arrangement.

The surah opens with three of the mysterious "disconnected letters" (alif-lam-mim) and then: "This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah - Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them" (2:2-3). Exegetes discuss competing grammatical readings of the phrase la rayba fih — whether "there is no doubt" stands as a complete predication or whether "fihi hudan" ("in it is guidance") forms its own clause — and some, including al-Qurtubi, read the verse's self-description as free of doubt as a rebuttal to the skepticism of Meccan polytheists and, in the Medinan context, of Jewish interlocutors who questioned the Qur'an's authenticity. This opening passage establishes the muttaqin (the God-conscious) as the first of three categories of response to revelation that structure the surah's introduction: belief characterized by unseen faith, ritual prayer, and charitable spending (2:2-5); flat disbelief, treated briefly — "Indeed, those who disbelieve - it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them - they will not believe" (2:6-7); and, at considerably greater length, hypocrisy (nifaq), addressed in verses 8-20.

This third category receives the most extended treatment, a proportion that plausibly reflects its concrete social urgency in early Medina. Classical commentators, including al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, associate this passage with the emergence of a hypocrite faction within the Medinan community

following the Hijra, sometimes linked to figures such as 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy, though the Qur'an itself names no individuals and any such association remains inferential rather than textually explicit. The passage deploys an escalating sequence of parables — hypocrites are likened to one who has kindled a fire that is then extinguished, leaving him in darkness (2:17), and to people caught in a rainstorm with thunder, lightning, and darkness, stopping their ears in terror (2:19-20) — imagery that dramatizes the psychological instability of professed but insincere belief. This extended treatment, disproportionate to hypocrisy's brief scriptural naming elsewhere, is generally read as responding to a real and pressing communal problem in Medina rather than as an abstract theological category introduced merely for rhetorical balance.

2:21-29: Address to mankind and the challenge to produce a surah

The passage shifts to direct address: "O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous" (2:21), continuing with a description of Allah's provision of earth, sky, and rain-produced fruit "as sustenance for you" (2:22). This functions as the surah's first universal call to worship, grounded in an argument from creation rather than from prior scriptural history.

Verses 23-24 introduce the Qur'an's challenge-motif (commonly termed i'jaz, "inimitability," in later theological literature): "And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant, then produce a surah the like thereof... But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire." This challenge to rival the Qur'an's composition recurs at several points across the text and became a cornerstone of later Islamic theological argument for the Qur'an's divine origin, though that later doctrinal elaboration exceeds what the verse itself states.

Verse 26 addresses an objection: "Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example - that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it..." Exegetical sources report that this verse responds to mockery, attributed variously to Meccan or Medinan skeptics, of the Qur'an's use of humble creatures — flies, spiders, mosquitoes — in its parables; the verse defends such imagery as consistent with divine purpose, adding that such examples "misleads many" and

"guides many," a formula introducing the theme of differential response to revelation that recurs throughout the surah. This section closes with brief reflection on divine creative power (2:28-29) that serves as a segue into the Adam narrative.

2:30-39: The creation of Adam, the divine trust, and the fall

This passage is among the most theologically consequential in the juz'. It opens: "And [mention, O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority [khalifah].' They said, 'Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?' Allah said, 'Indeed, I know that which you do not know'" (2:30).

The angels' question has occasioned considerable interpretive discussion. Al-Tabari records multiple strands of interpretation: some hold that the angels' concern reflects prior knowledge of earlier corrupt earth-dwellers (in some accounts, jinn said to have previously inhabited the earth), while others treat it as a form of intuitive reasoning drawn from the nature of clay-based creation. Ibn Kathir favors reading the angels' statement not as objection or defiance but as sincere inquiry born of insight, and treats Allah's reply — "I know what you do not know" — as foreclosing further discussion rather than as a rebuke of impertinence. The exchange establishes from the outset a Qur'anic motif that recurs throughout the text: human beings are granted a status (khilafah, vicegerency or stewardship) that even the angels do not straightforwardly comprehend or welcome, and this status is defended by appeal to a divine knowledge that exceeds angelic perspective.

The narrative continues with Adam being taught "the names, all of them" and then presented to the angels, who confess their inability to name what Adam can name (2:31-33). Al-Zamakhshari, writing from a Mu'tazili rhetorical perspective, emphasizes this scene's argumentative force: the angels' inability to answer functions as proof of Adam's superior capacity for language and abstraction — a reading occasionally brought into loose dialogue with modern discussions of the distinctiveness of human linguistic capacity, though such comparisons belong to later reception rather than to the verse itself.

The command to prostrate before Adam follows, obeyed by all the angels "except Iblis; he refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers" (2:34) — the Qur'an's first mention of the figure who becomes, in later passages, the tempter of Adam and Eve and the archetype of prideful refusal. Adam and his wife are then placed in the Garden with permission to eat freely "except this tree" (2:35); Satan causes them "to slip out of it" (2:36); and Adam "received from his Lord words" through which he repented and was forgiven (2:37), followed by the command to "descend" with the promise: "there will come to you guidance from Me, and whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve" (2:38).

A point of comparative significance, noted evenhandedly in academic treatments such as Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading of the Qur'an, is that this narrative establishes a Qur'anic anthropology centered on moral responsibility and forgiven transgression rather than a doctrine of transmitted "original sin" of the kind associated with certain strands of Christian theology reading the Genesis parallel; Adam's error here is personal, is followed by direct repentance and forgiveness, and does not function as a hereditary stain requiring atonement through a subsequent redemptive figure. This is offered as a descriptive comparative observation rather than a polemical claim, and it reflects a point of divergence noted across both confessional and academic commentary.

2:40-123: The extended address to the Children of Israel

This long block, running from verse 40 to roughly verse 123, constitutes the single largest thematic unit in the juz' and merits summary treatment of its constituent episodes rather than verse-by-verse commentary, given both its length and its recurring rhetorical pattern: recollection of divine favor, followed by recollection of transgression or rejection.

The address opens directly: "O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [and] I will fulfill your covenant" (2:40), and continues through reminders of favors bestowed (2:40-48), including deliverance from Pharaoh's oppression: "And [recall] when We saved your forefathers from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with the worst torment" (2:49), and the parting of the sea (2:50). The

narrative then turns to transgression: the making of the golden calf during Moses's absence upon the mountain (2:51-54, and again summarized at 2:92-93); the Israelites' request to see Allah directly and being "seized by a thunderbolt" for their audacity (2:55-56); and the provision of manna and quails in the wilderness (2:57).

A cluster of episodes follows in quick succession: the command to "enter this city" and say "hittah" (a word of repentance or humility) at its gate, and to enter bowing — met instead with substitution of the enjoined words for others, occasioning punishment (2:58-59); Moses striking the rock to produce twelve springs for the twelve tribes (2:60); a passage on the humiliation and poverty visited upon those who "disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets without right" (2:61); the well-known verse on communities of faith beyond the addressees' own — "Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him,] — those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness — will have their reward with their Lord" (2:62), a verse whose scope and implications for interreligious salvation have been debated at length in both classical and modern commentary, and whose relationship to later, more particular verses on communal exclusivity elsewhere in the surah (2:80-82, 111-113) remains a matter of ongoing exegetical discussion; and the account of the Sabbath-breakers, transformed, according to the text, into "despised apes" for their transgression (2:65-66).

The surah's namesake episode occupies verses 67-73: the Story of the Cow (al-baqarah). Moses commands the Israelites, by God's instruction, to sacrifice a cow; rather than complying directly, they respond with a series of increasingly specific and evasive questions — what color, what age, whether it is a working animal — each answer producing further hesitation, until the animal finally located is described in strikingly particular terms before the sacrifice is carried out and used, in the narrative, to help resolve a case of unexplained killing. Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both draw out a moral frequently associated with this passage: had the Israelites simply sacrificed any cow answering the original description, the command would have been satisfied, but their repeated questioning made an easy matter difficult, and

consequently it was made difficult for them — a lesson often extended in later fiqh discussion as a caution against unnecessary legal hair-splitting and in favor of ease and directness in religious obligation.

The extended address continues with recurring accusations of scriptural distortion (tahrif): "So woe to those who write the 'scripture' with their own hands, then say, 'This is from Allah'..." (2:79), and with claims to exclusive or automatic salvation on grounds of ancestry or brief punishment — "And they say, 'Never will the Fire touch us, except for a few days'" (2:80) — countered by the assertion that wrongdoing and its consequence are not suspended by communal identity alone. The taking of a covenant repeatedly broken is recalled (2:83-86), alongside accusations regarding the killing of prophets and the rejection of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophethood despite what the text presents as prior anticipation of his coming (2:87-91, 97-103). Within this stretch appears the passage concerning magic and the account of Harut and Marut, two angelic figures associated with Babylon and sorcery (2:102); al-Tabari catalogues numerous narrations on this episode, several bearing the marks of isra'iliyyat (transmitted material of Jewish or other non-Islamic origin absorbed into the exegetical tradition), and Ibn Kathir is notably more cautious here, urging that reliance be placed only on what is confirmed in the Qur'anic text itself and in authenticated hadith rather than on the fuller narrative elaborations found in some tafsir compilations. The block closes with material on abrogation and the wisdom underlying the pattern of revealed rulings (2:106), on the question of prayer direction toward Jerusalem before the qiblah's later change (touched on at 2:115 and anticipating the fuller treatment beginning at 2:142), and with disputes over religious exclusivism among Jews, Christians, and the emerging Muslim community (2:111-121), setting up the Abrahamic material that follows.

Historically, this entire extended engagement with the Bani Isra'il is best read against the social context of early Medina, where the Prophet's community coexisted with three principal Jewish tribes — Banu Qaynuqa', Banu Nadir, and Banu Qurayza. Historians and exegetes widely read this passage's argumentative and at times sharply polemical structure as reflecting the Qur'an's active engagement with, and critique of, that

community in the years following the Hijra, though the text does not narrate specific dated incidents corresponding one-to-one with each verse; the material is better understood as a sustained rhetorical and theological argument than as a chronicle of discrete historical events.

2:124-141: Abraham, the Ka'bah, and the "religion of Abraham"

The juz' closes with a passage of considerable rhetorical and historical significance, one that Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, treats as a deliberate pivot addressed simultaneously to the Medinan Jewish community and to the Quraysh of Mecca, reclaiming Abraham as a figure predating both Mosaic religious law and the Meccan cultic system centered on the Ka'bah.

"And [mention, O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], when Abraham was tried by his Lord with commands and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said, 'Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people.' [Abraham] said, 'And of my descendants?' [Allah] said, 'My covenant does not include the wrongdoers'" (2:124). This verse establishes Abrahamic leadership (imamah) as contingent on righteousness rather than automatically inherited by lineage — a qualification of considerable importance for the surrounding polemic against claims of salvation by ancestry alone, and one that anticipates the closing verses of the passage.

The narrative continues with the construction of the sacred house: "And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing'" (2:127), and with Abraham and Ishmael's prayer that a community arise from their descendants "submitting to You" and that God "raise up among them a messenger from themselves" who will recite His verses and teach the Book and wisdom (2:128-129). Ibn 'Ashur reads this final petition as the passage's argumentative center of gravity: Abraham's prayer for a messenger "from among them" is presented as directly anticipated and fulfilled in Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's own prophetic mission, an argument aimed specifically at Jewish interlocutors in Medina who questioned the legitimacy of a prophet arising outside the line of Israelite prophecy. Al-Qurtubi additionally draws juristic rulings from the construction narrative concerning the sanctity of the Ka'bah's precinct.

The passage proceeds to Abraham's and Jacob's charge to their own sons regarding exclusive monotheism — "he said to his sons, 'O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims [in submission to Him]'" (2:132) — and to the well-known creedal formula at 2:136: "Say, [O believers], 'We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Descendants [al-Asbat] and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [submitting] to Him.'" This verse functions as a summary creedal statement affirming continuity across the recognized prophetic line rather than supersession understood as wholesale rejection of prior prophets, a point of comparative theological interest frequently noted in interfaith and academic discussion of Qur'anic prophetology.

The closing verses of the juz' address communal boasting directly: "And they say, 'Be Jews or Christians [so] you will be guided.' Say, 'Rather, [we follow] the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth [hanifan], and he was not of the polytheists'" (2:135) — introducing the term hanif, denoting a form of primordial monotheism understood to predate and stand apart from both the established Abrahamic religions of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's day and the polytheism of the Quraysh. The passage closes by rejecting the notion that ancestral religious affiliation determines present standing: "That is a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do" (2:134, repeated at 2:141) — a formula insisting on individual moral accountability over inherited communal identity, and one that stands as the immediate rhetorical bridge to the passage on the change of the direction of prayer (qiblah) that opens the next juz' (2:142ff), an episode whose occasion is discussed in the hadith literature, including in Sahih al-Bukhari, but which falls just beyond the textual range treated in this chapter.

Reference should also be made in passing to Ayat al-Kursi (2:255), frequently cited among the most theologically dense verses of the Qur'an — "Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all]

existence..." — and described in a hadith transmitted in Sahih Muslim as "the greatest verse in the Book of Allah." This verse, however, falls within al-Baqarah's later portion and lies outside the 1-141 range covered by this juz'; it is noted here only to mark its place in the surah's larger structure, which readers will encounter in a later chapter's treatment of that portion of the text.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, this opening juz' establishes several threads that recur throughout the remainder of the Qur'an. Al-Fatiha supplies the liturgical frame — praise moving to petition — within which the entire scripture is recited in daily prayer, and its dialogic structure, as attested in the hadith qudsi of Bukhari and Muslim, models a relationship between divine sovereignty and human supplication that recurs in later passages. Al-Baqarah's opening then supplies a typology of response to revelation (belief, disbelief, hypocrisy) before turning to two foundational narratives: the creation and vicegerency of Adam, establishing a Qur'anic anthropology of moral responsibility rather than inherited guilt, and the extended, often critical engagement with the history and covenant of the Children of Israel, reflecting the concrete social and theological debates of the early Medinan community. The juz' closes by reaching further back still, to Abraham and Ishmael and the founding of the Ka'bah, reclaiming a monotheism (hanif) that the text presents as predating sectarian division altogether, and asserting that religious standing rests on individual righteousness and belief rather than on inherited communal affiliation — a claim with which the surah will continue to argue, at greater legal and polemical length, across the juz' that follow.

Juz’ 2: Surah al-Baqarah 2:142 — 2:252

Surah al-Baqarah 2:142 through 2:252

Juz’ 2 opens in the middle of Surat al-Baqarah's long Medinan address and covers roughly one hundred and ten verses, from the reorientation of Muslim prayer toward the Ka‘ba (2:142) through the closing affirmation of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophetic office (2:252). Thematically it moves through several distinct blocks: the qibla change and the self-definition of the emerging community as a "median" nation (2:142–152); exhortations to patience amid trial and the reclamation of the Safa-Marwa rite (2:153–158); ritual and dietary law interwoven with polemic against concealment of scripture (2:159–176); a pivotal redefinition of righteousness (2:177); the law of retaliation and bequests (2:178–182); the fasting legislation of Ramadan (2:183–187); brief instructions on the new moon and lawful gain before rules on warfare, the sacred precinct, and pilgrimage (2:188–210); a return to the theme of trial and the obligation to fight (2:211–220); marriage, menstruation, and divorce law (2:221–237); the "middle prayer" and provisions for widows (2:238–245); and finally the narrative of Talut and Jalut, which closes the juz’ on a note of prophetic history paralleling the community's own military and spiritual trials. The whole is Medinan legislative and communal material, generally dated by the classical tradition to the first two years after the Hijra, closely bound up with the community's consolidation in Medina and its approach to the Battle of Badr.

The Qibla Pericope (2:142–152)

The section opens abruptly with anticipated controversy: "The foolish among the people will say, 'What has turned them away from their qiblah, which they used to face?'" (2:142). The verse is proleptic — it answers an objection before the change it concerns has even been narrated, a rhetorical structure classical exegetes read as evidence that the passage addresses live controversy in Medina. Ibn Kathir, drawing on hadith preserved via al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib in both Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, identifies "the foolish" primarily as the Jews of Medina, with some reports extending the term to hypocrites and Meccan pagans who seized on the reversal to mock the Muslims’ religious consistency. The Prophet had prayed toward Jerusalem

(Bayt al-Maqdis) for some sixteen or seventeen months after the Hijra — other reports say closer to two years — a practice several exegetes, including Ibn ‘Ashur, read as an early gesture of conciliation toward the Jewish tribes of Medina and their scriptural tradition, or as continuity with a directional practice antedating the Meccan period.

The core verse follows: "We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah with which you will be pleased. So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it" (2:144). Bukhari records that news of the change reached the mosque of Bani Salima during the ‘Asr prayer, and worshippers reportedly turned bodily mid-prostration upon hearing it — the site subsequently commemorated as Masjid al-Qiblatayn, "the Mosque of the Two Qiblas." This is one of the more securely dated correlations between Qur’anic text and sira chronology in the entire surah, generally placed in Rajab or Sha‘ban of year 2 AH.

Interposed within this pericope is 2:143, among the most consequential verses in the chapter for later Muslim self-understanding: "And thus we have made you a just [median] community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you." Al-Tabari catalogues a range of early interpretations of wasat, from Ibn ‘Abbas and Mujahid’s gloss of "the best" (khiyar) to a more literal geometric sense of central positioning, avoiding extremes. The verse thus does two things simultaneously: it defends the qibla reversal as consistent with divine prerogative ("To Allah belongs the east and the west," 2:142) and it uses the occasion to articulate a broader claim about the community's balanced, witnessing role among nations — a self-designation that later Muslim tradition would draw on extensively, well beyond the immediate ritual-directional dispute. Ibn ‘Ashur situates the whole pericope within an argument about the maturing Medinan community's assertion of an independent religious identity, tracing the covenant through Abraham and Ishmael to the Arab Prophet's line rather than exclusively through the line associated with Jerusalem.

Trial, Patience, and the Rites of Safa and Marwa (2:153–158)

The community is next addressed directly: "O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient" (2:153). This introduces a short cluster on endurance under hardship, culminating in the well-known verses: "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.' Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy" (2:155–157). The formula of return (istirja‘) articulated here became, and remains, the standard Islamic liturgical response to bereavement and calamity, recited across the Muslim world upon receiving news of death. The passage carries no specific sabab al-nuzul in the classical sources beyond the general Medinan climate of hardship, though its placement immediately after the qibla controversy suggests a broader rhetorical function — bracing the community for the trials, including military ones, that the following pages of the surah will address.

Verse 2:158 then addresses a narrower scruple: "Indeed, al-Safa and al-Marwa are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever makes Hajj to the House or performs ‘umrah — there is no blame upon him for walking between them." Hadith preserved in sources such as Sunan Abu Dawud and the Musnad of Ahmad, and a report transmitted by ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr from ‘A’isha, indicate that some early converts — reportedly including Ansari Muslims — hesitated to perform the sa‘i (ritual walking) between these two hills because of their pre-Islamic association with the idols Isaf and Na’ila. The verse reclassifies the practice as belonging properly among "the symbols [sha‘a’ir] of Allah," decoupling the physical rite from its Jahili idolatrous associations — a pattern of continuity-with-reinterpretation that recurs elsewhere in the Qur’an's treatment of inherited Arabian ritual.

Concealment of Truth, Tawhid, and Dietary Law (2:159–176)

A polemical stretch follows, condemning "those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance" (2:159), understood by the classical exegetes as directed principally at People of the Book who withheld or obscured scriptural testimony bearing on the new Prophet's mission. This is followed by a concise doctrinal statement: "And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Entirely Merciful, the

Especially Merciful" (2:163). Though brief, the verse functions as a compact tawhid formula anticipating the far more elaborated Ayat al-Kursi, which falls just beyond this juz’s boundary at the opening of 2:255 in Juz’ 3 and is accordingly outside the present chapter's scope. Between these two poles, 2:164 offers an extended argument from design — the alternation of night and day, the rain that revives dead earth, the ships that traverse the sea, the winds and clouds — presented as a chain of "signs for a people who reason," a rhetorical strategy the surah returns to repeatedly when grounding tawhid in observable nature rather than argument from authority alone. The passage moves into a vivid eschatological tableau of disavowal: on the Last Day, those who were followed will disown their followers, and both will see their bonds severed (2:166–167) — a scene reinforcing the polemic against blind communal loyalty untethered from truth.

The dietary legislation of 2:168–176 follows, opening with an address to humanity broadly ("O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good") before narrowing to specific prohibitions — carrion, blood, swine flesh, and what has been dedicated to other than Allah — with the standard exception clause permitting consumption under necessity "without desiring [it] or transgressing" (2:173). The section closes with a severe warning against those "who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book and exchange it for a small price" (2:174–176), reiterating the concealment polemic and tying the dietary material to the broader argument about scriptural integrity.

The Redefinition of Righteousness (2:177)

Verse 2:177 functions as a hinge in the surah's argument and merits treatment on its own terms: "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets, and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteously fearing." Al-Zamakhshari reads the verse as a rhetorically pointed rejoinder

to any excessive fixation on the physical direction of prayer — a direct echo back to the qibla controversy that opened this section of the surah — redirecting attention from ritual orientation to an integrated ethical and theological vision comprising belief, charity, honesty, ritual observance, and endurance. Many commentators, ancient and modern, treat this verse as something of a thematic summation of the surah's ethical argument up to this point, and Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading of the Qur’an cites it as paradigmatic of the text's tendency to subordinate ritual particulars to underlying moral objectives.

Retaliation, Bequest, and Fasting (2:178–187)

Verses 2:178–179 introduce the law of qisas — retributive equivalence in cases of homicide — while permitting compensation (diyah) as an alternative: "and there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous" (2:179). Several exegetes report that the occasion involved a dispute between Medinan Arab clans over unequal blood-price customs, whereby one group claimed a status entitling it to harsher retribution against the other; the verse establishes a principle of equality before the law that overrides such tribal claims to superior standing.

Verses 2:180–182 turn to bequests (wasiyyah), instructing believers to leave a "reasonable" bequest to parents and near relatives "if he leaves wealth." Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir both give this a lengthy treatment specifically because of the subsequent abrogation (naskh) debate: the majority of jurists came to understand this general bequest obligation as superseded, or at least substantially restricted, by the fixed inheritance shares later specified in Surat al-Nisa’ (4:11–12), which allocate estates according to defined proportions among heirs. The bequest verse thus became a much-cited case study within classical legal theory's treatment of naskh, even as some scholars preserved a residual reading in which discretionary bequests to non-heirs (up to one-third of the estate) remain permissible alongside the fixed shares.

The fasting legislation opens at 2:183 with the verse "O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before

you that you may become righteous" — explicitly situating the practice within a lineage of earlier revealed traditions of fasting rather than presenting it as wholly novel. The following verses specify exemptions for the sick and the traveler, who may fast an equal number of days later, and for those unable to fast, a fidyah (feeding of the needy) as compensation (2:184). Al-Qurtubi devotes considerable space to the juristic variation across the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi‘i, and Hanbali schools regarding precisely who qualifies for these exemptions and what the fidyah entails. Verse 2:185 identifies Ramadan as the month "in which the Qur’an was revealed," reinforcing the connection between the fast and the descent of scripture.

Embedded within this legislative stretch is 2:186, frequently cited independently of its fasting context: "And when My servants ask you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], concerning Me, indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me." The verse's placement amid technical fasting rules is itself notable — a moment of intimate theological reassurance interrupting legal specification, often read by commentators as underscoring that ritual discipline is inseparable from personal closeness to God rather than mere legal compliance.

Verse 2:187 permits marital relations during the nights of Ramadan ("It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives") after an earlier restriction, and specifies the boundary of the fast: "eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]" — the famous description of the fajr threshold — before completing the fast until nightfall. The same verse also touches on i‘tikaf, retreat in the mosque, briefly noting that marital relations are not permitted "while you are in retreat in the mosques." The whole passage is dated by the classical sources to Sha‘ban of the second year after the Hijra, placing it in close chronological proximity to the first Ramadan fast observed by the community and to the Battle of Badr shortly thereafter.

Unlawful Gain, the New Moon, and the Sacred Precinct (2:188–210)

Two brief but consequential verses bridge the fasting material and the warfare-and-pilgrimage cluster that follows. Verse 2:188 prohibits consuming others' wealth unjustly "and [does not] give it to the rulers in order that

[they] might consume a portion of the people's wealth in sin, while you know [it is unlawful]" — a warning read by exegetes as directed against both outright theft or fraud and, more pointedly, the use of judicial or administrative channels to legitimize an unjust seizure of property. Verse 2:189 then answers a question about the crescent moon's changing phases, explaining them as "measurements of time for the people and for Hajj," before pivoting to a curious associated custom: some pre-Islamic Arabs in a state of ihram would reportedly avoid entering their houses through the front door, entering instead through a hole cut in the rear wall, a practice of supererogatory piety the Qur’an redirects with the instruction to "enter houses from their doors," reframing genuine piety (birr) as fearing Allah rather than performing such ritualized inconveniences.

Verses 2:190–195 then introduce rules of combat: "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors" (2:190), followed by permission to fight at or near al-Masjid al-Haram if attacked there, and the frequently cited principle that "persecution [fitnah] is worse than killing" (2:191) — a phrase invoked to justify military response to religious oppression even where combat itself is deemed grave. Ibn Kathir situates this cluster among the earliest verses permitting armed defense following the general restraint enjoined during the Meccan period, when combat had reportedly been forbidden outright. The section closes with the injunction "do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction" (2:195), read by exegetes both as a caution against reckless martial conduct and, more generally, as a principle against self-destructive behavior.

Verses 2:196–203 turn to Hajj and ‘Umrah: completing the rites for Allah, provisions for those prevented from completing them, prohibitions during the state of ihram (no obscenity, disobedience, or disputing), and the notable acknowledgment that seeking commercial "bounty from your Lord" during the pilgrimage season incurs no sin (2:198) — an accommodation to the pre-Islamic pattern of combining pilgrimage with trade. The standing at ‘Arafat and the remembrance at al-Mash‘ar al-Haram (Muzdalifah) are specified, along with the instruction to remember Allah "as your fathers were remembered, or with greater remembrance" (2:200), followed by the widely

recited supplication: "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire" (2:201).

Verses 2:204–210 pivot back to moral warning, describing a type of person "whose speech pleases you in worldly life" while harboring corruption (2:204), contrasted with one "who sells himself, seeking means to the approval of Allah" (2:207) — traditionally read as praise for self-sacrificing commitment to the cause. Verse 2:208 issues the call to "enter into Islam completely (kaffatan) and do not follow the footsteps of Satan," urging comprehensive rather than partial religious commitment, before the section closes with a warning against wavering "after clear proofs have come to you" (2:209–210).

Historical Reflection and the Renewed Call to Combat (2:211–220)

Verses 2:211–216 open with reflection on the favors granted the Children of Israel, then state a broader principle of human unity prior to prophetic differentiation: "Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth" (2:213). Verse 2:214 poses a rhetorical challenge to the believers — do they suppose they will enter Paradise without having faced trials comparable to those who came before, who were shaken until even the Messenger and believers with him cried "When is the help of Allah?" This functions as reassurance amid hardship, echoing the earlier patience cluster of 2:153–157. Verse 2:215 briefly addresses charitable spending — directing it toward parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, and travelers — before 2:216 returns to the theme of warfare in stark and psychologically candid terms: "Fighting has been enjoined upon you while it is hated by you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not." The verse has drawn sustained attention in both classical and modern scholarship for its unusually direct acknowledgment of believers' emotional resistance to a divinely mandated obligation, framed within a broader argument about the limits of human judgment relative to divine knowledge.

Verses 2:217–220 address a specific controversy: fighting during a sacred month. The sira literature, including material preserved by Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, connects this to the expedition to Nakhla, in which combat occurred during the sacred month of Rajab, provoking criticism from pagan Meccans and Medinan Jews that the Muslims had violated a longstanding Arabian taboo. The Qur’an's response does not deny the gravity of fighting in a sacred month but relativizes it: "fighting therein is great [sin], but averting [people] from the way of Allah and disbelief in Him and [preventing access to] al-Masjid al-Haram and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater [evil] in the sight of Allah. And fitnah is greater than killing" (2:217). Immediately following, 2:219 turns to wine and gambling: "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit." Hadith report that Companions, including ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, had directly petitioned the Prophet for a ruling on these matters, making this among the earliest Qur’anic verses to address alcohol. Both al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir note its gradualist (tadaraj) character relative to the fuller and unambiguous prohibition articulated later in Surat al-Ma’idah (5:90–91), where hadith describe Companions who had been drinking pouring the remaining wine into the streets of Medina upon hearing the final ruling. This staged legislative pattern — an early verse acknowledging mixed costs and benefits, followed much later by categorical prohibition — is frequently cited in source-critical and legal-theoretical scholarship on naskh and progressive revelation as a paradigm case, a point acknowledged within the classical Muslim tradition itself rather than being solely an academic construct. Verse 2:220 closes the cluster with guidance on the proper treatment of orphans' property, permitting the intermingling of an orphan's assets with a guardian's household provided the guardian's intent is reform rather than exploitation.

Marriage, Menstruation, and Divorce Law (2:221–237)

Verse 2:221 prohibits marriage between believers and polytheists in both directions ("do not marry polytheistic women until they believe... and do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe"), establishing religious compatibility as a condition of Islamic marriage law. Verses 2:222–223 turn to menstruation, instructing that "they are hurt (adha)" during

menses and that intercourse should be avoided until purification, while the following verse states "your wives are a tilth for you, so come to your tilth however you wish" — a verse whose agricultural metaphor has drawn extensive classical and modern commentary on its intended sense (commonly read as addressing permissible manner rather than orifice). The passage is reported to respond to a Medinan practice — possibly Jewish-influenced — of avoiding menstruating wives entirely, even socially, which the Qur'anic ruling moderates by permitting normal domestic contact short of intercourse.

Verses 2:224–232 form a dense cluster of family law: guidance on oaths (2:224), the four-month limit on ila' (a vow of abstention from one's wife, 2:226–227), the 'iddah (waiting period) of three menstrual cycles for divorced women (2:228), the foundational statement that "divorce is twice" — establishing the framework of revocable divorce followed by a final, irrevocable third pronouncement (2:229) — the well-known "second husband" condition, whereby a woman divorced a third time cannot remarry her original husband until she has married and been divorced from another (2:230), and prohibitions against obstructing a divorced woman's lawful remarriage (2:232). Verses 2:233–237 continue with breastfeeding obligations for mothers following divorce, financial maintenance obligations during nursing, the widow's waiting period of four months and ten days along with associated mourning conventions (2:234), the permissibility of indirect (but not explicit) marriage proposals during a woman's 'iddah (2:235), and rulings distinguishing divorce before and after consummation, including the mut'ah — a consolation gift owed in certain circumstances (2:236–237). This entire stretch is treated by the commentarial tradition primarily as positive law, generating extensive juristic elaboration in works such as al-Qurtubi's, rather than as material calling for close theological exposition verse by verse.

The Middle Prayer and Widows' Provision (2:238–245)

Verse 2:238 briefly interrupts the family-law material: "Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer (al-salat al-wusta) and stand before Allah, devoutly obedient." The identity of "the middle prayer" became a matter of sustained classical debate; Ibn Kathir

surveys the range of opinion among Companions and Successors and concludes that the dominant view identifies it with ‘Asr, citing a hadith — preserved in Sahih Muslim among other collections — in which the Prophet is reported to have made this identification explicitly on the day of the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq, 5 AH), when the prayer's disruption by combat prompted his clarifying remark. It should be stressed that this hadith's occasion pertains to the circumstances of the Prophet's statement rather than necessarily to the original context of the verse's revelation, which the classical sources do not tie to that battle. Verse 2:239 permits an abbreviated form of prayer "if you fear [an enemy]," whether on foot or riding, extending to conditions of both danger and travel.

Verses 2:240–242 address the position of widows, specifying a year's maintenance and residence for widows without expelling them from the marital home, while acknowledging their right to leave voluntarily — a provision many exegetes regard as having been effectively modified by the later, more specific waiting-period and inheritance rulings, though the classical tradition preserves the verse and its debate rather than treating it as simply void. General exhortations toward "reasonable provision" for divorced women follow (2:241), and the section closes with a call to reflection: "Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you might use reason" (2:242).

Verses 2:243–245 offer a brief, allusive narrative: reference to a group who left their homes "in the thousands, fearing death," were commanded by God to "die," and were subsequently given life again (2:243) — a passage the exegetical tradition often links to reports of Israelites fleeing an epidemic, functioning as an illustration that flight cannot avert a divinely appointed fate. This flows directly into a renewed call to fight in Allah's cause and the exhortation to "lend Allah a goodly loan" (2:245), tying the section back to the combat and charitable-spending themes developed earlier in the juz’.

The Narrative of Talut and Jalut (2:246–252)

The juz’ closes with an extended narrative passage recounting the Israelites' request to their prophet for a king to lead them in battle, framed initially with skepticism about their resolve: "Is it not that you would refrain from fighting

if fighting was prescribed for you?" (2:246). Allah appoints Talut (Saul) despite the people's objection that he lacked wealth and lineage befitting kingship, with the prophet's rejoinder that Allah has chosen him and increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature (2:247). The confirming sign is the return of the Ark (tabut), bearing "assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left" (2:248). The narrative reaches its most vivid episode at 2:249, the test at the river: "So when Talut set out with the forces, he said, 'Indeed, Allah will be testing you with a river. So whoever drinks from it is not of me, and whoever does not taste it is indeed of me, excepting one who takes [from it] in the hollow of his hand.'" Most of the force fails the test, leaving only a small remnant, who nonetheless declare, upon facing the vastly larger army of Jalut (Goliath): "How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah. And Allah is with the patient" (2:249). The confrontation culminates at 2:251: "So they defeated them by permission of Allah, and David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him the kingship and prophethood and taught him from that which He willed." The passage draws on the Israelite prophetic tradition parallel to the Saul-David-Goliath narrative found in 1 Samuel 8–17, presented here to a Medinan audience that included Jewish interlocutors familiar with the underlying account. Al-Qurtubi's treatment of the episode draws extensively on Isra’iliyyat material transmitted through Companions such as Ibn ‘Abbas, while registering the standard classical caveat that such reports, originating outside the Qur’anic text itself, warrant critical caution rather than uncritical acceptance. While the passage is not tied to any specific Seerah event as its occasion of revelation, the thematic resonance with the Muslims' own situation — a materially weaker force facing a larger one "by Allah's permission," as would occur at Badr — has been widely noted by commentators as a typological rather than a documented historical parallel. The juz’ closes at 2:252 with a direct authorial affirmation: "These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], in truth. And indeed, you are from among the messengers" — a verse confirming prophetic messengership and forming a deliberate close before the doctrinal high point of Ayat al-Kursi opens the following juz’.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, this portion of Surat al-Baqarah moves the Medinan community through a coherent arc: establishing a distinct ritual and communal identity vis-à-vis the Jewish tribes of Medina (the qibla change and the "median community" formula), consolidating core legal-ritual practice (fasting, retaliation law, dietary and pilgrimage rules), addressing the psychologically and legally fraught onset of armed conflict (the combat verses, the sacred-month controversy, the staged treatment of intoxicants), regulating the texture of family and marital life (divorce, ‘iddah, widowhood), and finally grounding the community's self-understanding in a typological reading of earlier prophetic history. Modern scholarship — represented here by Angelika Neuwirth's redactional approach to Baqarah's Medinan growth and Nicolai Sinai's chronological analyses — treats this material as reflecting the community's incremental legal and social consolidation over the early Medinan period, a picture broadly, if not uniformly, consonant with the classical asbab al-nuzul tradition's own account of piecemeal revelation tied to specific Medinan circumstances. Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading, emphasizing 2:177's ethical synthesis, offers a useful lens for the juz’ as a whole: ritual particulars — the direction of prayer, the details of fasting, the technicalities of divorce — are repeatedly anchored back to underlying moral and communal purposes, a pattern that recurs from the qibla pericope's opening through to the closing affirmation of prophetic guidance at 2:252.

Juz’ 3: Surah al-Baqarah 2:253 — Surah Al ‘Imran 3:92

Surah al-Baqarah 2:253 through Surah Al ‘Imran 3:92

The transition into ethical exhortation (2:253–254)

The juz’ begins with a verse asserting differentiation among the messengers: some were raised in degree above others, some received direct divine speech, and Jesus son of Mary was given clear proofs and strengthened by the Holy Spirit (rūḥ al-qudus). The verse also notes, in its second half, that had God willed, those who came after these messengers would not have fought one another after clear proofs had come to them — yet they differed, some believing and some disbelieving. This serves as a hinge: it closes off the extended narrative material concerning the Israelites that dominates the latter part of the second juz’, and pivots toward the ethical and legal material that follows. Verse 254 then addresses the believers directly, urging them to spend from what they have been provided before a Day comes in which there is no bargaining (bay‘), no friendship (khulla), and no intercession (shafā‘a) — and identifies the disbelievers as the wrongdoers. The verse functions programmatically, since spending in the way of God (infāq) becomes the sustained subject of the passage immediately following, and the same three negations — bargaining, friendship, intercession — echo forward thematically into the juz’s closing appeal in 3:92 that true righteousness is unattainable without spending from what one loves.

Āyat al-Kursī (2:255)

The most celebrated verse of the juz’, and by many accounts of the whole Qur'an, follows immediately:

"Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great."

The verse is a compact, self-contained credal statement built almost entirely of divine attributes stated in negation and affirmation: negation of multiplicity (no deity but Him), negation of decay or need (neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him, their preservation does not tire Him), and affirmation of comprehensive ownership, knowledge, and elevation. Ibn Kathīr transmits a hadith, found in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, in which the Prophet asked the Companion Ubayy ibn Kaʿb which verse of the Qur'an he considered greatest; when Ubayy answered with this verse, the Prophet reportedly struck his chest and said, "may knowledge be pleasant for you, Abū al-Mundhir" — a report widely cited as establishing the verse's preeminence among reciters. Exegetically, the majority position transmitted by Ibn Kathīr treats the *kursī* as a distinct, created reality lesser in majesty than the *ʿarsh* (the Throne proper), though a minority of early exegetes equated the two terms; this remains an area where the classical tradition records genuine disagreement rather than settling on a single reading. The verse also touches, in its rhetorical question "who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission," on a theme that recurs throughout the Qur'an: intercession is not denied outright but is subordinated entirely to divine permission, a formulation that anticipates later theological disputes (both intra-Islamic and interfaith) about mediating figures between the human and the divine.

No compulsion in religion (2:256–257)

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in Taghut and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing."

Al-Ṭabarī records a debate among early exegetes over whether this declaration remains a general, standing principle or whether it was later restricted or effectively abrogated by verses commanding armed struggle against polytheists. The majority position among later exegetes, including Ibn Kathīr, holds that the verse remains general in scope but concerns specifically the *inward* act of belief — one cannot be coerced into genuine faith — rather than governing every subsequent legal or political arrangement. Al-Ṭabarī's occasion-of-revelation material links the verse to a

specific situation among the Anṣār of Medina: households in which children had been raised as Jews or Christians (in some reports, through the influence of wet-nurses or prior conversion), whose parents, upon embracing Islam themselves, wished to compel those children to convert as well; the verse is reported to have been revealed forbidding exactly this kind of coercion within the family. The verse's second half introduces the term *ṭāghūt* — a name for false objects of worship or illegitimate authority — and sets up the antithesis, elaborated in the following verse (2:257), between God as the *walī* (protecting guardian/ally) of the believers, who brings them "out of darknesses into the light," and the *ṭāghūt* as the patron of the disbelievers, who leads them the opposite direction, "from the light into darknesses." This darkness/light polarity recurs across the Qur'an as a governing metaphor for guidance and error.

Abraham and the disputer; the four birds (2:258–260)

The passage then turns narrative. Verse 258 recounts an unnamed figure who disputed with Abraham concerning God's power over life and death, boasting that he himself could give life and cause death (understood by the classical exegetical tradition, on the authority of transmitted reports rather than an explicit Qur'anic identification, as a reference to Nimrod); Abraham responds by pointing to the sun's rising in the east, challenging his opponent to make it rise in the west instead, at which "the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment]." Verse 259 then narrates a separate figure who passed by a ruined town and doubted how God could bring it to life after its death, whereupon God caused him to remain in a state of death for a hundred years before reviving him, showing him his own preserved food and drink alongside the bones of his donkey being reassembled and clothed with flesh — a demonstration answered by the man's declaration, "I know that Allah is over all things competent." Verse 260 then presents Abraham himself asking to be shown how God gives life to the dead; when asked whether he believes, Abraham answers "yes, but [I ask] that my heart may be satisfied" — a phrase the classical tradition reads as an appeal for experiential reassurance rather than intellectual doubt. God then instructs Abraham to take four birds, cause them to become familiar with him, then place a portion of each on separate hills and call them, whereupon they

come to him swiftly — a vivid demonstration of resurrection presented in miniature.

The economics of charity (2:261–274)

This is the first of the juz''s extended legal/parenetic blocks, and it repays block-level rather than verse-by-verse treatment, since its persuasive strategy operates cumulatively across a dozen-plus verses rather than through any single dense formula.

The passage opens with an agricultural parable: "The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains" (2:261), establishing multiplication as the governing metaphor for charitable return. It then immediately qualifies this promise with an ethical condition: such spending must not be followed by reminders of the favor given (*mann*) or by hurtful words (*adhā*), for these nullify the reward as surely as "a smooth stone upon which is dust, and a downpour hits it and leaves it bare" (2:264) — a second parable, this one of erosion rather than growth, deployed to illustrate spending vitiated by ostentation ("to be seen of people") and disbelief. Verses 265–266 then contrast two gardens: one on elevated fertile ground that produces double its yield even in light rain, representing sincere spending; the other struck by a fierce wind while its owner is old and has dependent children, so that it is burned and he is left with nothing — a vivid image of wasted effort applied, in the closing rhetorical question, to those who wish for reward without the corresponding sincerity. Verse 267 forbids offering "the bad [i.e., inferior]" portion of one's wealth in charity, the kind one would not accept oneself except with reluctance, insisting instead on giving from "the good things" earned and produced. Verses 268–269 introduce a psychological contrast between Satan's promise, which threatens poverty and commands immorality, and God's promise of forgiveness and bounty, adding that God "gives wisdom (ḥikma) to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good" — a verse frequently cited independently of its immediate context as a general statement on the value of wisdom. The block closes by distinguishing open and secret charity (2:271, noting secret giving to the poor as "better for you"), reaffirming that guidance is God's alone to grant regardless of human

effort (2:272), and describing a category of deserving poor "who have restricted themselves in the way of Allah" and, out of modesty, do not ask persistently, such that the unfamiliar might suppose them wealthy — identified by their outward restraint rather than active solicitation (2:273).

The prohibition of ribā (2:275–281)

The passage on usury is among the most consequential legal sections of the Qur'an and is widely held, according to traditional reports, to be among the very last material revealed. Verse 275 opens with an arresting simile: "Those who consume interest cannot stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity." The verse continues by reporting the objection of those who equate trade (*bayʿ*) with usury (*ribā*), and refutes it flatly: "Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest." Verses 276–279 escalate in severity, promising that God "destroys interest and gives increase for charities," and commanding believers to "give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers" — with the explicit warning, for those who do not comply, of "war from Allah and His Messenger" (2:278–279), one of the starkest formulations of consequence anywhere in the legal portions of the Qur'an. Verse 280 then tempers the severity of debt collection with a command of leniency: if the debtor is in hardship, "then [let there be] postponement until [a time of] ease," and it is better still to forgo the debt as charity. The block closes with 2:281, a solemn eschatological reminder to "fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah," commonly identified among the very last verses revealed to the Prophet. Traditional occasion-of-revelation material links this legislation to a dispute over outstanding usurious debts between two clans of Thaqīf (Banū ʿAmr ibn al-Mughīra and Banū al-Mughīra), reportedly resolved in connection with the Prophet's address at the Farewell Pilgrimage in 10 AH — one of the more concrete seerah correlations in this juzʾ, though as with much occasion-of-revelation material it should be read as an interpretive tradition rather than an established historical fact. Fazlur Raḥmān's thematic reading of the Qur'an treats this legislation, together with the preceding charity material, as central to what he calls the Qur'an's socio-economic *weltanschauung*, urging that the ribā prohibition be read as integrated with the broader ethic of equitable spending rather than as an isolated legal atom.

Āyat al-Dayn: the verse on debt (2:282–283)

Verse 282 is the longest single verse in the Qur'an, and its length is itself significant: it is a sustained, almost contractual piece of legislative prose embedded within a scripture whose surrounding material is largely devotional or narrative. It opens: "O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down..." and proceeds to specify that a scribe should write "in justice" and not refuse to do so; that the debtor should dictate the terms while fearing God; that if the debtor is incapable, his guardian should dictate justly; that two witnesses from among the men should attest, or one man and two women "so that if one of the women errs, the other can remind her"; and that scribes and witnesses should not be harmed or refuse when called upon, "for that is more just in the sight of Allah and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt among yourselves." Ibn Kathīr and al-Qurṭubī treat this verse as foundational to Islamic commercial and contract law, deriving from it rules on written instruments, witness qualification, and the classical (and much-discussed) formula on the number and composition of witnesses. Regarding the pairing of two women with one man, most classical commentators explain the provision functionally — as accounting for the possibility that one woman might forget and require the other's reminder — rather than asserting an innate deficiency in women's testimony as such; this functional reading, while classical rather than purely modern, is worth noting as the mainstream juristic explanation transmitted in the tafsīr literature rather than a bare assertion. Verse 283 then addresses the case of travel without access to a scribe, permitting a pledge (collateral) taken in hand instead, while still urging that trust between the parties, where it exists, should not be abused, and closing with the instruction that testimony should not be concealed, "for whoever conceals it - his heart is indeed sinful."

The closing verses of al-Baqarah (2:284–286)

The surah's close returns from legislative detail to declaration and supplication. Verse 284 states starkly that whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to God, and that "whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it." Al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr report that this verse caused real distress among the Companions,

who understood it to mean accountability even for fleeting, unwilled thoughts; a hadith transmitted in both Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim records that the Prophet taught them to respond "sami‘nā wa aṭa‘nā" (we hear and we obey), after which relief came through the understanding — reinforced by further hadith — that God overlooks what the soul merely whispers to itself, so long as it is not acted upon or spoken aloud. Verse 285 then affirms that "the Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers," affirming all of God's angels, books, and messengers "without discrimination between any of His messengers," and records the community's collective response: "We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination." The surah closes with 2:286, a verse of covenantal reassurance:

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity... Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we forget or make a mistake... You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people."

A hadith in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim reports that these closing two verses (2:285–286) were given to the Prophet during the Mi‘rāj (the Night Journey and Ascension) as a distinct gift, with the accompanying report that whoever recites them at night will find them sufficient — one of the more specific and well-attested seerah linkages in this juz’, distinguishing this passage from the surah's general Medinan setting.

Opening of Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān: scripture and its interpretation (3:1–9)

The new surah opens by affirming the divine origin and internal consistency of revealed scripture: God has sent down the Book confirming what preceded it, having earlier sent down the Torah and the Gospel "as guidance for the people," and then the Qur'an itself as *furqān* (a criterion distinguishing truth from falsehood). This opening establishes a continuity-of-revelation theme that runs through the surah's subsequent engagement with Jews and Christians. Verse 7 then offers one of the Qur'an's most consequential statements about its own hermeneutics:

"It is He who has sent down to you [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him] the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise/muḥkamāt - they are the foundation of the Book - and others unspecific/mutashābihāt... those in

whose hearts is deviation follow that of it which is unspecific, seeking discord and seeking an interpretation [suitable to them]. And no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. But those firm in knowledge say, 'We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.'"

The verse has drawn sustained attention both in classical tafsīr and in Western academic Qur'anic studies as a self-referential statement about the nature of scriptural ambiguity. Al-Zamakhsharī's *al-Kashshāf* gives an influential treatment of the grammatical and rhetorical question at its center: whether the sentence stops after "except Allah" (in which case ta’wīl, the true interpretation of ambiguous verses, belongs to God alone) or continues so as to include "and those firm in knowledge" among those who also possess some access to that interpretation. This is not merely a philological curiosity; it bears directly on questions of religious epistemology — how confidently interpreters may claim to resolve textual ambiguity — and some modern scholars have suggested, more tentatively than any single school of classical exegesis, that the verse's own syntactic ambiguity may itself be a deliberately mutashābih feature of the text, folding its subject matter into its form. Verses 8–9 close the opening with a prayer attributed to "those firm in knowledge," asking God not to let their hearts deviate after having been guided, and affirming belief in a coming Day "about which there is no doubt."

Warnings, worldly adornment, and the definition of religion (3:10–25)

This stretch warns that wealth and children will not avail disbelievers against God "at all," drawing an explicit parallel to the fate of "the people of Pharaoh and those before them" who denied God's signs and were seized for their sins (3:10–11) — invoking the pattern (*sunna*) of God's dealing with past nations as a general principle rather than a claim confined to history. Verse 14 catalogues the adornments made attractive to human beings — women, children, treasures of gold and silver, fine horses, cattle, and tilled land — before contrasting these transient pleasures of worldly life with "the good return" that is with God (3:14–15). Verse 19 delivers a compact and much-cited doctrinal statement: "Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islām" — read by the classical tradition as *islām* in the generic sense of submission to God common to all true prophetic teaching, while later in the

surah (3:83–85) this identification is elaborated more explicitly. The passage closes by addressing the People of the Book directly regarding their disputing over scripture despite possessing knowledge of it, a rhetorical mode — direct address to Jewish and Christian audiences — that, as Ibn ʻĀshūr observes in *al-Taḥrīr wa'l-Tanwīr*, characterizes much of the surah's argumentative structure, plausibly reflecting its Medinan setting amid interfaith polemic following the arrival of the Najrān delegation, discussed further below.

Āyat al-Mulk (3:26–27)

"Say, 'O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will...'"

This supplication, addressed by the Prophet to God, affirms unilateral divine control over dominion, honor, and humiliation, and closes (in the remainder of 3:27) with reference to God bringing forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and providing without account to whom He wills. Al-Qurṭubī links the verse's revelation to reports of the Prophet's promise regarding a future Muslim ascendancy over the lands of the Persian and Byzantine empires — a promise delivered, notably, during a period of considerable political weakness for the early Muslim community, giving the verse a consolatory function within its traditional setting.

Loyalty, love, and obedience (3:28–32)

A brief but pointed passage intervenes before the surah turns to its central narrative. Verse 28 warns believers against taking disbelievers as intimate allies (*awliyāʼ*) in preference to other believers, while permitting a prudential dissimulation of outward courtesy (*taqiyya*, in the sense discussed by the exegetes) where genuine danger to life is at stake — a provision the commentators generally read as circumstantial and defensive rather than as license for ordinary insincerity. Verses 29–30 press the point theologically: God knows whatever is concealed or revealed, and every soul will be confronted, on a Day it wishes were distant, with whatever good or evil it has done. Verses 31–32 then supply what later interpreters, including Ibn Kathīr, describe as the surah's own criterion of authentic love for God: "Say, 'If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you...'" — a conditional linking sincere love of God inseparably to emulation of the

Prophet's example, followed by a summons to obey God and the Messenger, with the warning that "Allah does not like the disbelievers" for those who turn away. This short unit thus functions as a hinge between the polemical material on worldly adornment and religious identity just concluded and the narrative of the House of ʻImrān that follows, grounding both in a single demand for undivided loyalty.

The House of ʻImrān, Mary, and Jesus (3:33–63)

This is the surah's core narrative section and merits sustained attention. It opens by declaring that God selected Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of ʻImrān "above the worlds" (3:33), establishing a lineage of chosen households culminating in the Qur'anic account of Mary's family. The wife of ʻImrān is described vowing her unborn child in dedication to God's service; upon giving birth to a daughter rather than the expected son, she names her Mary and seeks refuge for her and her offspring from Satan (3:35–36). Mary is then received into the care of Zechariah, and whenever he enters her sanctuary (*miḥrāb*), he finds provisions already with her; when he asks their source, she answers that they come "from Allah," for "Allah provides for whom He wills without account" (3:37) — a miracle of sustenance that Nicolai Sinai and other academic scholars have noted bears compositional resemblance to elements of the Christian apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James*, which similarly describes Mary's upbringing within the Temple precincts; this comparative observation is treated descriptively in the scholarly literature as a live area of discussion rather than settled proof of direct literary borrowing.

Witnessing this sign, Zechariah is moved to pray for a son of his own despite his old age and his wife's barrenness; he is answered with the annunciation of John (Yaḥyā), given as a name unprecedented for anyone before him (3:38–41), with the accompanying sign of Zechariah being unable to speak to people for three days except by gesture. The narrative then turns to the central annunciation: angels tell Mary that God has chosen her and purified her above the women of the worlds (3:42), instruct her to devotion, and announce a word from God whose name is "the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary," honored in this world and the next and among those brought near to God (3:45). Mary's astonishment — "how will I have a child when no man has

touched me?" — receives the answer that God creates what He wills, and that when He decrees a matter He simply says to it "be," and it is (3:47), a formula (*kun fa-yakūn*) that recurs elsewhere in the Qur'an as a shorthand for unmediated divine creative power. Verses 48–51 then list Jesus's prophetic mission and signs: he will speak to people in the cradle and in maturity; he is taught the Torah, the Gospel, and wisdom; he creates the likeness of a bird from clay and breathes into it so that it becomes a bird "by permission of Allah"; he heals the blind and the leper and raises the dead, again explicitly "by permission of Allah" — a qualifying phrase repeated insistently across the passage and central to the Qur'anic Christology being constructed here, which locates every miraculous act firmly within delegated, not intrinsic, power. Jesus's own summons is reported directly: "indeed Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him" (3:51). When Jesus senses disbelief from his people, he asks who will be his helpers "for Allah," and the disciples (*ḥawāriyyūn*) answer that they are helpers for God and believe in Him, asking to be recorded among the witnesses (3:52–53).

Verses 54–55 then address the plotting against Jesus and God's countering plan, including the notoriously difficult term describing God's action toward Jesus (*mutawaffīka*), which is disputed among exegetes without adjudication attempted here — the term has historically supported multiple interpretive trajectories regarding the manner and timing of Jesus's departure from worldly life. The passage's theological center of gravity, however, is verse 59, which delivers the Qur'an's principal rebuttal of claims to Jesus's divine sonship through direct analogy: "Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him, 'Be,' and he was." The logic is economical — if being created without a father does not make Adam divine, then neither does it Jesus, since both proceed from the same unmediated creative command. Ibn Kathīr and al-Ṭabarī, in expounding this narrative, draw at points on Israelite-tradition material (*isrāʾīliyyāt*) — for instance regarding the identity of ʻImrān's wife or the tradition of Zechariah's trade as a carpenter — while explicitly cautioning readers about the uneven reliability of such material, a methodological caveat characteristic of the more careful strand of classical tafsīr.

The section closes with the mubāhala verses (3:59–61), addressed to those who continue to dispute about Jesus after knowledge has come:

"Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you - say, 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together] and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars [among us].'"

The traditional sīra and tafsīr literature connects this passage, and much of the surrounding material in 3:1–63, to the visit of a delegation of roughly sixty Christians from Najrān (in Yemen) to Medina, who debated the nature and status of Jesus with the Prophet. When the delegation persisted in its Christological claims despite the Qur'anic argument, the Prophet is reported to have invited them to this mutual invocation of a curse upon whichever party was lying; the delegation reportedly declined the challenge and instead accepted a treaty relationship involving payment of jizya. It is worth flagging a genuine chronological difficulty here: later sīra works often place the Najrān delegation's visit around 9 AH, considerably later than the early-Medinan dating generally preferred by modern scholars for much of Sūrat Āl ʻImrān's composition. This tension between the traditional narrative chronology and the internal/comparative dating of the surah's material is best treated as an open question in current critical scholarship rather than one that can be neatly resolved on present evidence, and it is noted here descriptively rather than adjudicated.

Abraham's religious identity and warnings against the People of the Book (3:65–80)

The argument then turns from Christian to broader interfaith polemic. Verses 65–68 dispute Jewish and Christian claims to exclusive possession of Abraham, pointing out that the Torah and Gospel were not revealed until after him, and conclude that Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian but a *ḥanīf muslim* — an upright monotheist in submission to God — with the verse adding that the people closest to Abraham are those who followed him, this Prophet, and those who believe. Verses 69–74 warn of a faction among the People of the Book who wish to lead believers astray, and who conceal or distort scripture; verse 78 delivers a pointed accusation — often cited in

interfaith and text-critical discussions of scriptural transmission — that some among them "distort the Book with their tongues" so that a hearer might suppose an addition to be part of scripture when it is not from God at all. Verses 79–80 close this stretch by insisting that no human being given the Book, wisdom, and prophethood would ever say to people "be servants to me rather than Allah," but rather would say "be pious scholars of the Lord," and that no prophet would ever command taking angels and other prophets as lords — a direct theological safeguard against the very kind of deification the preceding Jesus narrative had already addressed by analogy.

The prophetic covenant and the closing appeal (3:81–92)

Verse 81 describes a covenant taken by God from the prophets: whatever Book and wisdom they were given, and then a messenger came confirming what was with them, they were to believe in him and support him — a verse widely discussed in classical tafsīr regarding the scope and referent of "a messenger" confirming prior revelation. Verses 83–85 return to and sharpen the earlier declaration on religion: "So is it other than the religion of Allah they desire, while to Him have submitted [all] those within the heavens and earth, willingly or by compulsion..." and, most pointedly, verse 85: whoever seeks a religion other than *islām* (submission), it will never be accepted from him, and he will be, in the Hereafter, among the losers. Verses 86–91 then warn of the gravity of disbelief after having believed, with verse 91 stating that those who die as disbelievers will not have accepted from them even an earth full of gold offered in ransom. The juz’ closes with verse 92, returning to the theme of sincere spending first introduced at the juz’'s opening in 2:254:

"Never will you attain righteousness until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it."

Synthesis

Read as a whole, this juz’ moves through registers that at first appear disjointed — credal declaration, narrative demonstration, economic legislation, contractual prose, prophetic biography, and interfaith polemic — yet several threads bind it together. One is the recurring insistence, from

Āyat al-Kursī through the Jesus narrative to the closing verses of Āl ʻImrān, on strict divine unicity: no intercession without permission, no miracle without delegation, no messenger who would ever direct worship toward himself. A second is the ethical centrality of sincere, uncoerced spending, framed at the juzʼ's opening (2:254), elaborated at length in the charity and ribā legislation (2:261–281), and restated as the very definition of attained righteousness at its close (3:92). A third is a sustained concern with the integrity and interpretation of scripture itself — from the muḥkamāt/mutashābihāt distinction of 3:7 to the accusations of textual distortion in 3:78 — which situates this juzʼ as engaging not only its immediate audience of believers but, increasingly as it moves into Āl ʻImrān, the neighboring communities of Jews and Christians with whom the early Medinan community was in active theological dialogue and dispute. The juzʼ's apparent discontinuity of genre, in this light, is less a lack of design than a record of a community's attention moving, in sequence, from what it owes to God, to what it owes to one another, to who it understands itself to be in relation to the older scriptural traditions surrounding it.

Juz’ 4: Surah Al ‘Imran 3:93 — Surah an-Nisa 4:23

Surah Al ‘Imran 3:93 through Surah an-Nisa 4:23

I identified one gap in coverage: the draft jumps from the polygamy/dower verses (4:2–4) directly to the inheritance shares (4:11–12), silently skipping 4:5–10 (safeguarding the property of those of weak judgment, testing orphans' competence before handing over their wealth, witnessing distribution, and the warning against consuming orphans' wealth "as if eating fire"). I've inserted a new paragraph covering that passage, and made minor prose tightening elsewhere. Below is the complete, corrected chapter.

This juz'—the fourth of the Qur'an's thirty divisions—spans the final third of Surah Al 'Imran (3:93–200) and the opening section of Surah an-Nisa (4:1–23). It moves through a dense sequence of registers: brief polemical exchange with the Banu Isra'il over dietary law, the establishment of Hajj as a universal obligation, an urgent call to communal unity and moral leadership, an extended theological and pastoral response to the trauma of the Battle of Uhud, a closing meditation on contemplative faith, and then—with the transition to Surah an-Nisa—a shift into the foundational legal-ethical material of Qur'anic family law: the treatment of orphans, the regulation of polygamy, the core inheritance shares, and the boundaries of permissible marriage. Read as a whole, the juz' illustrates how the Qur'an interweaves communal crisis, theological consolation, and concrete legislation within a single continuous discourse.

The dispute over dietary law and the sanctity of the first House (3:93–97)

The juz' opens mid-argument. Verse 93 recalls that "all food was lawful to the Children of Israel except what Israel [Jacob] had made unlawful to himself before the Torah was revealed," addressing a specific polemical claim advanced by some Jews of Medina against the Prophet's teaching. Exegetes report that this exchange concerned which dietary restrictions predated the Sinai revelation and which were later Mosaic legislation—an argument over precedence used to challenge Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's authority to declare certain foods permissible. The Qur'an's

rejoinder is to invite scrutiny of the Torah itself: "Say, 'Then bring the Torah and recite it, if you should be truthful'" (3:93).

From this narrow dispute the passage pivots, in 3:96, to a sweeping historical claim: "Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Bakkah—blessed and a guidance for the worlds." The identification of the Ka'ba (here called by the older toponym Bakkah) as the primordial sanctuary, preceding even Jerusalem in the Qur'anic telling, functions polemically and theologically at once: it relocates the axis of monotheistic sanctity to Mecca and grounds the subsequent legislation of Hajj in claimed antiquity rather than novelty.

That legislation arrives in 3:97, one of the most consequential verses of the passage: "In it are clear signs [such as] the standing place of Abraham. And whoever enters it shall be safe. And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House—for whoever is able to find thereto a way. And whoever disbelieves [it means] indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds." The verse's legal weight rests on a single qualifying phrase: man istata'a ilayhi sabila, "whoever is able to find thereto a way." Ibn Kathir's discussion of istita'ah (capability) surveys the juristic effort to specify what this ability comprises—bodily fitness, financial means sufficient for the journey and for those left dependent, and the practical safety of the route—conditions that later fiqh elaborated into the detailed rulings governing exemption from Hajj. He also cites hadith material warning of the gravity of neglecting the pilgrimage despite having the means to perform it, though he flags that the most severe wording in circulation is transmitted with a chain some scholars attribute to a Companion or Successor rather than as a directly Prophetic statement—a point worth noting as a matter of hadith criticism rather than assuming automatic authenticity. The verse's closing clause, that Allah is "free from need of the worlds," reframes the obligation: failure to perform Hajj when able is a spiritual loss to the negligent individual, not a deficiency in the divine.

Unity, moral leadership, and the warning against alliance with disbelief (3:98–120)

The following stretch turns hortatory. Verse 103 is pivotal: "And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided." Al-Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan documents the range of early interpretation attached to habl Allah, "the rope of Allah"—variously glossed by Companions and Successors as the Qur'an itself, as Islam as a comprehensive way of life, or as the unified community (jama'a) that submission to revelation produces. The image of a rope—something grasped collectively, preventing individual members from falling away—suits all three readings without requiring a single resolution, and later commentators have generally treated them as complementary rather than competing.

Verse 104 supplies an institutional corollary: "And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful." Verse 110 restates and universalizes the charge: "You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah." Al-Qurtubi's Al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an treats these two verses together as the scriptural anchor for the juristic doctrine of hisba—commanding right and forbidding wrong—debating at length whether the obligation is collective (fard kifaya, discharged if some portion of the community undertakes it) or falls on each individual according to capacity. The designation "best nation" (khayru ummah) in 3:110 is, in his treatment and in the broader tafsir tradition, understood as conditional rather than an unconditional privilege: the verse's own grammar ties the community's excellence to the ongoing practice of enjoining right, forbidding wrong, and believing in God, not to ethnic or historical status as such.

This section also contains a series of warnings against taking disbelievers as intimate allies or confidants (awliya'), most concentrated in 3:118–120: "O you who have believed, do not take as intimates those other than yourselves... Here you are loving them, but they are not loving you." Read in context, the passage addresses a specific concern with security and political loyalty within a young and embattled community rather than proposing a general theory of interpersonal relations with non-Muslims, though later readers have drawn varying conclusions about its scope.

The aftermath of Uhud: trial, rebuke, and consolation (3:121–180)

This is the longest and most tightly bound narrative-didactic unit in the juz'. Classical exegesis, drawing on maghazi material woven directly into commentary by both al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, situates nearly the whole block within the Battle of Uhud (Shawwal, 3 AH) and its immediate theological processing. Modern chronological scholarship, including Angelika Neuwirth's treatment of Al 'Imran within her middle-to-late Medinan grouping, similarly reads this material as the surah's rhetorical center of gravity—a sustained address to a community absorbing a genuine military and psychological setback, rather than a loose assemblage of independent fragments. At the same time, some scholars of Qur'anic chronology note that the passage was likely revealed and possibly compiled over a period following the battle rather than delivered as a single discrete unit, a point that need not undermine its thematic coherence.

The passage opens in 3:121 with the Prophet's departure from his household "to post the believers at their stations for war," situating the reader at the outset of the campaign. Verses that follow narrate the fracturing of Muslim ranks: two factions "were about to lose courage" (3:122), divine aid at Badr is recalled as prior evidence of support (3:123–126), and then, at 3:152, the reversal is addressed directly—"Allah had fulfilled His promise to you when you were killing them by His permission, until [the time] when you lost courage and fell to disputing about the order [given by the Prophet] and disobeyed." This verse encapsulates the sira account, elaborated at length in both al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir's tafsir with substantial incorporation of battle narrative: a contingent of archers, stationed by the Prophet on a hill overlooking the field to guard the Muslim rear, abandoned their position upon seeing apparent victory in order to gather spoils, exposing the army to a Meccan cavalry flanking maneuver under Khalid ibn al-Walid that turned the engagement.

Verse 139, amid this material, offers reassurance: "So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers." Verse 141 reframes the defeat theologically as tamhis—a purifying trial distinguishing genuine faith from its counterfeit, a reading emphasized in academic treatments of how the passage textually manages communal trauma by

recasting military failure as pedagogical necessity rather than divine abandonment.

The most theologically pointed verse in this stretch is 3:144: "Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels? And he who turns back on his heels will not harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful." Az-Zamakhshari's Al-Kashshaf gives close rhetorical attention to the verse's interrogative construction, reading "would you turn back on your heels" as an istifham inkari—a rhetorical question functioning as rebuke rather than genuine inquiry. The verse responds directly to the false report, spreading amid the confusion of battle, that the Prophet had been killed, a report that caused some fighters to falter. Its theological claim—that prophethood does not confer personal immortality, and that fidelity to the message must not be contingent on the messenger's continued physical presence—outlives its immediate occasion. This is confirmed by a well-documented later episode: the hadith preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari recounting that upon the Prophet's actual death in 11 AH, Abu Bakr stood before the shaken community in Medina and recited precisely this verse, reminding them that Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, like every messenger before him, was mortal, and that whoever worshipped Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him should know Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him had died, while whoever worshipped God should know God remains living and does not die. It is a rare case of a Qur'anic verse from this juz' being redeployed at a distinct, later, and independently attested moment in the historical record.

The passage's treatment of the dead follows in 3:153–175, addressing grief over the fallen with an unusual doctrinal claim in 3:169–170: "And do not think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, rejoicing in what Allah has given them of His bounty." The verses continue by describing the martyrs' joy both in their own reward and in anticipating that of "those [believers] left behind, that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve" (3:170). Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim preserve hadith material on the virtue and reward of martyrdom frequently cited by commentators alongside

this passage. The verses function pastorally as much as doctrinally: addressed to a community that had just buried its dead—including notable Companions honored in later sira accounts of Uhud's casualties—they reframe battlefield death not as terminus but as a transition to a state of active divine provision and anticipatory joy on behalf of the living.

The block closes (roughly 3:172–180) with commendation of those who returned to face the enemy again despite wounds, warning against the "hypocrites" and waverers who had held back, and a broader meditation on trial and testing (fitna) as a mechanism by which God distinguishes the corrupt from the pure among the believers (3:179). Academic treatments of this passage, including those situating it within Neuwirth's chronological framework, have noted it as something of a test case for how scripture processes collective trauma—turning a battlefield reversal into an occasion for theological instruction, communal cohesion, and consolation, a rhetorical strategy discussed without a single settled scholarly consensus on its precise compositional history.

Polemic against claims of divine want, and the sealing verses (3:181–189)

A shorter polemical unit follows, responding to a specific and provocative claim: "Allah has certainly heard the saying of those who said, 'Indeed, Allah is poor, while we are rich'" (3:181). Exegetes connect this remark to statements attributed to particular Jewish figures in Medina—reports name individuals such as Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf or Finhas depending on the source, though the specificity and reliability of these attributions vary across the tradition and should not be treated as uniformly certain. The remark is read as a mocking response to the Qur'anic exhortation elsewhere to "lend Allah a goodly loan" (cf. 2:245), twisted into an accusation of divine neediness. The passage continues with warnings to "those who were given the Scripture" against concealing what they know (3:187), a recurring theme in the Qur'an's engagement with the People of the Book across this period, and closes with a caution (3:188) against those who wish to be praised for what they have not done.

Contemplative closing of Al 'Imran (3:190–200)

The surah's final movement shifts register entirely, from polemic and battlefield consolation to devotional meditation. Verses 190–191 read: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, are signs for those of understanding [ulu'l-albab]—who remember Allah while standing, sitting, or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], 'Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly.'" This description of the "possessors of understanding" as those who combine intellectual reflection on the cosmos with continuous remembrance and prayer has been read by many commentators as an idealized closing self-portrait of the community the surah has just walked through crisis and consolation. The surah ends at 3:200 with an exhortation to patience, mutual encouragement in patience, readiness (ribat), and fear of God—"that you may be successful," a benediction that closes the extended arc opened at the start of the surah.

The opening of Surah an-Nisa: shared origin and the ethics of kinship (4:1)

The transition into Surah an-Nisa marks a shift from communal-historical narrative to systematic family legislation, but the surah begins by grounding that legislation in a universal ethical premise rather than launching directly into law. Verse 1 reads: "O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs [al-arham]. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer." Ibn 'Ashur's al-Tahrir wal-Tanwir draws attention to the verse's address to "mankind" (al-nas) generally rather than to believers specifically—a rhetorical choice that situates the ensuing legislation within a universal claim about common human descent from a single soul (nafs wahida) rather than presenting it as sectarian or parochial. Fazlur Rahman's reading of Qur'anic ethics treats this opening, together with the verses that follow, as programmatic: the family law that follows—on orphans, marriage, and inheritance—is anchored in an ethic of shared origin and the sanctity of kinship (arham, literally "wombs," extended to mean kinship ties) that precedes and grounds the specific rulings, rather than the rulings standing as isolated legal fragments.

Orphans, polygamy, and the conditions of justice (4:2–4)

The immediately following verses address the treatment of orphans' property directly and severely: "And give to the orphans their properties and do not substitute the defective [of your own] for the good [of theirs]... Indeed, this is ever a great sin" (4:2). Verse 3 then introduces the regulation most closely associated with this section of the surah: "And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice]."

The verse's conditional structure has drawn sustained attention across the exegetical tradition. Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Qurtubi all discuss a reported connection between the verse's opening clause—fear of injustice toward female orphans under one's guardianship—and the permission that follows regarding plural marriage. The sabab al-nuzul most frequently cited traces, through 'Urwa ibn al-Zubayr from A'isha, to a concern that guardians were marrying the female orphans in their charge, drawn by their wealth or attractiveness, without providing them a fair dower comparable to what other women would receive; the verse is read as redirecting such men toward marrying women outside their guardianship instead, where fair terms could be more readily assured, while still permitting plural marriage up to four as an alternative to exploiting a ward. It is worth flagging that this widely repeated account of occasion rests on a relatively narrow chain of transmission and should be understood as the tradition's prevailing account rather than an independently corroborated certainty.

Crucially, the tradition consistently reads 4:3 as a conditional permission rather than a command or an unqualified endorsement of polygamy: the verse is bracketed on both ends by concern for justice ('adl), first toward orphans and then, in its final clause, toward co-wives generally—"if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one." Al-Qurtubi's treatment elaborates at length on the juristic content of this required justice, generally understood by jurists to concern equitable treatment in material provision and time rather than an impossible demand for equal internal affection (a distinction some point to in relation to the later verse 4:129, which

acknowledges that perfect equality of feeling between wives is beyond human capacity). Verse 4 continues the theme by insisting that women receive their bridal gifts (saduqat) as a rightful due, a corrective against practices in which dower was appropriated by male relatives.

Safeguarding property: the competence test and the warning against consuming orphans' wealth (4:5–10)

A short but weighty run of verses extends the surah's concern for dependents from marriage into direct property management, and is easily overlooked between the more frequently cited verses on either side of it. Verse 5 instructs guardians not to hand over to "those of limited understanding" (al-sufaha')—understood by the exegetical tradition to include, among others, orphans not yet judged capable of managing their own affairs—the very wealth that God has made "a means of sustenance" for them, directing instead that they be provided for and spoken to with kindness out of that wealth while it remains under guardianship. Verse 6 then sets out a practical safeguard: orphans are to be tested (fa'in anastum minhum rushdan) as they approach maturity, and only once sound judgment (rushd) is discerned in them should their property be released, with the transaction ideally witnessed. The same verse addresses the guardian's own conduct directly, permitting a guardian of modest means to draw a reasonable wage from the orphan's estate in exchange for the labor of management, while instructing a guardian who is already well-off to abstain from any personal use of the funds altogether—a provision al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir both read as calibrating the guardian's compensation to need rather than treating oversight of an orphan's wealth as an opportunity for enrichment. Verse 7 briefly turns to a related principle of inheritance—that both men and women hold a due share of what parents and near relatives leave behind, "whether the property be small or large"—anticipating the fuller legislation to follow in 4:11–12, while verses 8–9 add a pastoral note recommending that something be given, where feasible, to relatives, orphans, and the needy who happen to be present at a division of property, and warning those distributing an estate to treat the orphans before them as they would wish their own vulnerable descendants to be treated after their own death. The passage culminates in verse 10 with one of the starkest

warnings in the Qur'an on any single topic: "Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire, and they will be burned in a Blazing Fire." Commentators read the verse's stark imagery—wealth transmuted into literal fire within the transgressor's body—as underscoring, in the sharpest terms available to the text, that abuse of guardianship over the vulnerable is treated as a matter of the gravest moral consequence rather than an ordinary financial wrong.

The core inheritance legislation (4:11–12)

Verses 11 and 12 constitute the Qur'an's central inheritance legislation, specifying fixed shares (fara'id) for children, parents, and spouses with a precision unusual within the broader Qur'anic legal corpus: "Allah instructs you concerning your children: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females... And for parents, to each one of them a sixth of his estate if he left children... but if he left no children and the parents [alone] inherit from him, then for his mother a third..." (4:11), continuing through the shares due to husbands and wives depending on the presence or absence of children (4:12).

Given the density and technical character of these verses, they are best treated as a legal block rather than word-by-word: the passage specifies that a son's share is double a daughter's in the basic case; that parents each receive a sixth when the deceased leaves children, with the mother's share rising to a third in their absence (subject to further qualification when the deceased has siblings); that a surviving spouse's share varies between a half or a quarter for a husband, and a quarter or an eighth for a wife, contingent on the presence of children. Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both give extended attention to a computational problem that these fixed fractional shares can generate but do not themselves resolve: cases in which the sum of the specified shares exceeds the total estate, a situation later fiqh addressed through the doctrine of 'awl (proportional reduction of shares). Scholars of the historical development of Islamic law, including work by Behnam Sadeghi and David Powers on the trajectory from Qur'anic text to classical jurisprudence, have noted that this and related elaborations—such as the integration of these Qur'anic fixed shares with the pre-existing Arabian system of agnatic residuary heirs ('asaba)—represent substantial juristic

development beyond what the explicit Qur'anic text specifies, illustrating the gap between scriptural base and the fully articulated classical inheritance system. Verse 12 concludes with the phrase repeated in the surrounding verses characterizing these as "the limits set by Allah" (hudud Allah, 4:13–14), with 4:13 promising admission to gardens of Paradise for compliance and 4:14 warning of severe consequence for transgressing them—language that underscores the binding, non-negotiable character the Qur'an assigns to this legislation.

Sexual immorality, repentance, and the question of abrogation (4:15–18)

Verses 15–16 prescribe an early measure regarding sexual immorality (fahisha) among women: "confine them to houses until death takes them or Allah ordains for them [another] way" (4:15), with a related but less specific measure mentioned for the parties involved in 4:16. Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both discuss this as an early and comparatively lenient—if administratively severe—provision that most of the exegetical tradition holds was later specified or superseded in practice by the fixed corporal punishment prescribed in Surah an-Nur (24:2). Whether the relationship between the two verses is best described as naskh (abrogation) or takhsis (specification of an initially general or provisional ruling) remains a point of ongoing discussion within the tradition rather than a settled matter, and it is presented here descriptively rather than as resolved. Verses 17–18 then address repentance (tawba) as a divine acceptance extended to those who err out of ignorance and turn back promptly, contrasted with the futility of repentance sought only at the moment of death or by the unrepentant persisting in disbelief.

Prohibition on inheriting women, and fair dealing in marriage and divorce (4:19–21)

Verse 19 addresses a specific pre-Islamic custom directly: "O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion, and do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality." Exegetes link this to the practice whereby the heir of a deceased man—commonly a son by another wife, or another male relative—could claim the widow as an inheritable asset, either

marrying her without offering a fresh dower or preventing her remarriage until she paid to free herself from his claim. The verse forecloses this practice and continues with a broader injunction to "live with them in kindness" even where a husband dislikes his wife, cautioning that "perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good." Verses 20–21 extend the same concern for fair dealing to divorce, prohibiting a husband from reclaiming any part of a substantial dower already given, "though you have given one of them a great amount," and invoking the solemnity of the marriage contract itself, described as a "solemn covenant" (mithaqan ghalizan).

The list of prohibited marriages (4:22–23)

The juz' closes with the enumeration of prohibited degrees of kinship for marriage. Verse 22 first addresses marriage to a father's former wife—explicitly closing a further pre-Islamic practice—before verse 23 provides the fuller list: mothers, daughters, sisters, paternal and maternal aunts, nieces, foster-relations established through nursing, wives' mothers, stepdaughters raised in one's household (under specified conditions), the wives of one's own sons, and the combination of two sisters in marriage simultaneously. The verse is treated closely across the tradition for its categorical structure, since it forms the scriptural basis for the entire later juristic architecture of mahram relations governing permissible and forbidden marriage partners, a topic elaborated at considerably greater length in classical fiqh manuals but rooted directly in this enumeration.

Synthesis

Read across its full span, this juz' displays a characteristic Qur'anic movement between register: from a narrow scriptural dispute over dietary law to the establishment of a universal ritual obligation in Hajj; from an urgent call to communal solidarity to the searching theological reckoning with a genuine military defeat at Uhud, in which prophetic mortality, the meaning of martyrdom, and the reframing of setback as trial are worked through in real time; and then, via a contemplative closing meditation on creation and remembrance, into the opening architecture of Qur'anic family law—the safeguarding of orphans' property and persons, the conditioned

regulation of polygamy, the fixed shares of inheritance, and the boundaries of licit marriage. Academic treatments, from Neuwirth's chronological reading of Al 'Imran's engagement with a specific communal crisis to Fazlur Rahman's account of an-Nisa's opening as ethically integrated with its legislation, converge on a shared observation: the material of this juz', despite its surface variety of genre—polemic, battle narrative, consolation, devotional reflection, and detailed law—is bound together by a persistent concern with the terms on which a community coheres: through shared ritual, mutual loyalty in crisis, theological honesty about loss, and just treatment of its most vulnerable members, particularly orphans and women, within the family structures the closing verses of the juz' begin to codify.

Juz’ 5: Surah an-Nisa 4:24 — 4:147

Surah an-Nisa 4:24 through 4:147

Juz’ 5 of the Qur’an opens partway into Surat an-Nisa’ ("The Women"), a lengthy Medinan surah whose middle portion — verses 24 through 147 — constitutes the bulk of the present chapter. The surah as a whole is conventionally dated to the years following the Battle of Uhud (3 AH), a period in which the nascent Medinan community was engaged in reorganizing itself around new social, economic, and legal arrangements: the disposition of orphans' property, the regulation of marriage and inheritance, and the internal cohesion of a community that had just suffered a serious military reversal and was contending with ambiguous loyalties in its ranks. Modern academic treatments of the Qur'an, alongside the classical Muslim exegetical (tafsir) tradition, generally concur in reading this segment of the surah as social and legal legislation addressed to the concrete circumstances of the early Medinan polity, interwoven with broader theological and eschatological material. The following discussion moves through the segment thematically, treating pivotal, legally or theologically consequential verses in close detail while summarizing longer legislative and narrative stretches in block form, and noting throughout where classical exegesis, sectarian tradition, and modern scholarship diverge or converge.

Marriage law and the verse on mahr (4:24–28)

Verse 4:24 arrives as the continuation of a list, begun at 4:23, of women prohibited to a man in marriage by reason of kinship or existing marital status. The verse's operative clause, in the Saheeh International rendering, reads: "...And [also prohibited to marry] are all married women except those your right hands possess. [This is] the decree of Allah upon you. And lawful to you are [all others] beyond these, [provided] that you seek them [in marriage] with [gifts from] your property, desiring chastity, not unlawful sexual intercourse. So for whatever you enjoy [of marriage] from them, give them their due compensation as an obligation..." Classical Sunni exegetes — al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Qurtubi among them — read this verse primarily as instituting the payment of a dower (mahr) as a constitutive element of licit marriage, and situate the clause concerning "those whom your right

hands possess" within the historical context of captive women taken in early military campaigns. The asbab al-nuzul literature reports that Companions raised questions about the lawfulness of relations with captive women whose husbands remained among the polytheists, and the verse's language is read by Sunni commentators as resolving that specific circumstance; as with much material of this kind, the reports vary somewhat in detail and should be read as broadly representative of the exegetical tradition's understanding rather than as a single, precisely dated incident.

The verse carries a further significance that the classical and modern literature treats rather differently across sectarian lines. Its Arabic phrase "mustamti'una" (rendered variously as "you seek enjoyment" or "you contract [marriage] for enjoyment") derives from the same root as mut'a, the term for fixed-term or temporary marriage. Twelver Shi'i exegetical scholarship — represented in academic literature by studies such as Sachiko Murata's treatment of the subject — argues that the verse's plain sense supports the continuing permissibility of mut'a marriage, a position tied to a broader current within Shi'i jurisprudence that regards the practice as licit. Sunni exegetes, by contrast, hold that whatever tolerance may once have applied to the practice was subsequently abrogated or prohibited outright; Sunni hadith literature, including material found in Sahih Muslim's chapter on mut'a, transmits reports attributed to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib himself asserting the Prophet's prohibition of the practice — a striking feature of the debate, since 'Ali is also a central authority within the Shi'i tradition that regards mut'a as permissible. This is consequently a genuine, long-documented point of Sunni-Shi'i disagreement rather than a matter on which the classical sources speak with one voice, and it remains a live subject of philological and historical-legal discussion in modern academic Islamic studies rather than a settled question.

The following verses, 4:25–28, extend the marriage legislation to address the situation of believers unable financially to marry free believing women, permitting marriage to believing slave women under specified conditions. The passage frames this provision explicitly as a concession to hardship — "Allah wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]," as the closing verses put it — and situates the surah's marriage law generally within a stated divine

intent to accommodate human weakness rather than impose maximal burdens. Modern historical scholarship on the social conditions of seventh-century Hijaz has often read this cluster of verses, alongside the surah's opening treatment of orphans, as evidence of a broader Qur'anic project of incrementally reordering existing kinship, property, and marital custom rather than displacing it wholesale.

Economic and domestic ethics; the qiwama verse (4:29–35)

Verses 4:29 through 4:35 form a dense cluster addressing economic conduct and domestic order. Verse 4:29 prohibits consuming one another's wealth unjustly, permitting only mutually consensual trade, and closes with a warning against self-destruction or the destruction of others, a phrase read by some commentators as extending beyond commercial ethics into a broader prohibition on harming oneself or the community; verse 4:31 offers a warning against "major sins," with the assurance that avoiding them secures forgiveness of lesser faults; verse 4:32 addresses gender differentiation in inheritance shares as an already-established given rather than newly legislating the matter within this verse itself (the primary inheritance shares having been detailed earlier in the surah, at 4:11–12), while also cautioning against envying what God has granted others; verse 4:33 concerns covenant and inheritance arrangements, including the allocation of shares to those bound to a person by oath or alliance; and verse 4:35 directs that arbiters be appointed from both families in cases of marital discord, a provision generally read by commentators as institutionalizing a mediating mechanism prior to more drastic remedies.

Between these lies verse 4:34, among the most extensively discussed and contested verses in the entire Qur'an in both classical and contemporary literature. The Saheeh International rendering reads: "Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand." Classical exegetes — al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, al-

Qurtubi — ground the notion of qiwama (rendered here "in charge of," and elsewhere "protectors and maintainers") in two considerations: men's financial responsibility for household maintenance (nafaqa), and a stated preference or excellence (tafdil) attributed to men in certain unspecified respects. The classical corpus itself records substantial internal disagreement over the three-stage response to nushuz (a term itself translated variously as "arrogance," "ill-conduct," or "rebellion") outlined in the verse — verbal admonition, separation in the marital bed, and finally the disputed term "daraba." Modern academic and reference literature, including catalogues such as that maintained by the Brandeis Feminist Sexual Ethics Project, document more than a dozen competing English renderings of daraba and of nushuz across translation history, spanning from "strike" in its most literal and forceful sense to more restrictive readings (a light, symbolic tap; a gesture of separation rather than physical contact) advanced by some modern and classical commentators alike. Academic Islamic studies treats this as a genuine and unresolved philological and ethical-historical question, situated at the intersection of textual semantics, the history of Qur'anic exegesis, and modern ethical and legal reform debates, rather than as a point on which either the classical tradition or contemporary scholarship converges on a single settled reading. Hadith material transmitted in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, containing prophetic statements urging good treatment of wives — such as the widely cited formulation "the best of you are those best to their wives" — is commonly invoked by both classical and modern commentators alongside this verse, though such hadith are not themselves transmitted as direct occasion-of-revelation reports for 4:34, and their relevance to the verse is best understood as a matter of later exegetical juxtaposition rather than textual linkage attested in the earliest sources.

The ethics of kindness and a warning against ostentation (4:36–42)

Verses 4:36 through 4:42 broaden the surah's scope from marital and economic law to a more general ethical statement. Verse 4:36 enjoins the worship of God alone and prohibits associating partners with Him (shirk), then enumerates an extended list of those owed kindness: parents, near relatives, orphans, the poor, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away,

the companion at one's side, the traveler, and those "whom your right hands possess." This list — notable for its breadth, extending outward from immediate kin to strangers and travelers — is followed in 4:37–38 by censure of miserliness, of those who urge miserliness upon others, and of charitable giving performed for the sake of being seen by others (riya') rather than sincere belief. Verses 4:39–40 affirm that God wrongs no one even the weight of an atom while multiplying the reward of good deeds many times over, and the passage closes at 4:41–42 with an eschatological image: a scene in which witnesses are summoned against every nation and every individual on the Day of Judgment, with the Messenger himself among the witnesses testifying concerning his own community — a moment commentators read as underscoring the seriousness with which testimony and accountability, themes recurring throughout the segment, are treated in the Qur'anic worldview.

Ritual concessions and polemic against scriptural distortion (4:43–57)

Verses 4:43 through 4:46 address matters of ritual purity, prohibiting prayer while intoxicated (the intoxicant here understood by exegetes as referring to a stage in the Qur'an's gradual, multi-stage restriction of alcohol, culminating later in the outright prohibition of Surat al-Ma'idah) or in a state requiring purification without access to water, and introducing the concession of tayammum (dry ablution using clean earth) for travelers or the infirm lacking water — a provision commentators generally read as continuous with the surah's broader pattern of accommodating hardship. The same passage turns polemical at 4:46, criticizing certain individuals among the People of the Book for distorting words from their contexts (tahrif) and directing plays on words at the Prophet under the guise of respectful address, a theme resumed and extended through 4:47–57, an extended passage addressing associationism and the corruption of revealed teaching attributed to some among the People of the Book, interwoven with eschatological material contrasting the fate awaiting disbelievers with that awaiting believers, and including, at 4:54, a rhetorical question asking whether such critics envy people for what God has granted them of His bounty.

Trust, adjudication, and the verse of obedience (4:58–70)

This passage, spanning verses 4:58 through 4:70, constitutes one of the more consequential clusters in the segment for later Islamic political and legal thought. Verse 4:58 opens with an injunction to render trusts to those entitled to them and to judge with justice between people; verse 4:59 follows immediately with what is widely known in the tradition as the "verse of obedience": "O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result." Classical exegetes report differing early identifications of "those in authority among you" (ulu al-amr): some transmitted reports understand the phrase as referring to the Companions acting as military commanders in specific campaigns, others to scholars and jurists, and still others to rulers and political authorities generally. Az-Zamakhshari's commentary, while accepting a reading oriented toward legitimate communal leadership, stresses a structural feature of the verse's grammar: the verb "obey" is repeated for God and for the Messenger but not restated for "those in authority," implying — on this reading — that obedience to communal authority is conditioned upon and subordinate to obedience to God and His Messenger, rather than standing as an independent, unconditional claim. This verse subsequently became a foundational proof-text within medieval Sunni political jurisprudence for theories of obedience to legitimate rulers, an elaboration that later jurisprudential literature developed considerably beyond the immediate exegetical tradition, a matter noted in modern academic reference treatments of the verse's reception. Regarding the verse's occasion of revelation, al-Wahidi's Asbab al-Nuzul and later tafsir works report — with some variation across sources — a connection to a military expedition under a Companion commander whose controversial orders to his troops tested the limits of obedience owed to Muslim authority; other narrations link the verse instead to disputes over adjudication generally, and the precise isnad and collection attribution for these reports would require further verification before firm citation in any given instance.

Verses 4:60–63 rebuke those who profess faith while seeking judgment from sources other than the Prophet's arbitration, describing such people as turning away in aversion when called to that judgment, a theme that

culminates in verse 4:65, among the more seerah-anchored verses in this segment: "But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in full, willing submission." Ibn Kathir transmits two distinct occasion-of-revelation reports for this verse. The first, attributed to al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam's own testimony, concerns a dispute between al-Zubayr and an Ansari man over irrigation rights from a shared watercourse in Medina; the Prophet's initial ruling, perceived by the Ansari as favoring his kinsman al-Zubayr, prompted a complaint of favoritism, which in turn led the Prophet to issue a stricter ruling in al-Zubayr's favor — and, per al-Zubayr's report, to the revelation of this verse affirming the binding character of the Prophet's judgment. The second report concerns two litigants who, after bringing a dispute to the Prophet, saw the losing party reject the verdict and appeal successively to Abu Bakr and then 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, with 'Umar ultimately killing the man for his refusal to accept the Prophet's judgment — an episode some sources tie to this verse's revelation, though as with much asbab al-nuzul material, the two reports are not straightforwardly reconcilable as a single historical event and should be read as distinct transmitted traditions rather than a unified narrative. Classical exegetes generalize from the verse a principle — later extended considerably by jurists — that genuine faith requires accepting properly constituted Islamic judicial authority without internal resistance. The passage closes at 4:69–70 with the assurance that obedience to God and the Messenger secures companionship, in the hereafter, with the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous — "and excellent are those as companions."

Warfare, hesitancy, and the plight of the oppressed (4:71–87)

Verses 4:71 through 4:87 address the psychological and practical dimensions of the early community's military engagements in the aftermath of Uhud. Verse 4:71 counsels caution and preparedness in fighting, whether advancing in separate detachments or as a united force; 4:72–74 criticize those inclined to hold back from battle out of self-interest, professing relief at being spared harm while begrudging believers their success, while promising

reward to those who fight in God's cause "whether he is killed or achieves victory." Verse 4:75 poses a rhetorical question that has drawn frequent citation in later literature on just war and the defense of the vulnerable: "And what is [the matter] with you that you fight not in the cause of Allah, and [for] the oppressed among men, women, and children who say, 'Our Lord, take us out of this city of oppressive people...'" — a verse commentators generally connect to the continued plight of vulnerable Muslims who had remained in Mecca, unable to emigrate. Verse 4:76 contrasts believers, who fight in the cause of God, with disbelievers, who fight in the cause of tayghut (tyranny or false authority), and counsels that the plots of Satan are inherently weak. Verses 4:77–79 address believers anxious about the newly binding prescription to fight — recalling an earlier stage when some had asked for permission to fight before it was ordained — and reflect on questions of fate and divine decree, insisting that both good and adversity ultimately proceed from God while human wrongdoing bears its own responsibility; verse 4:80 restates that obedience to the Messenger constitutes obedience to God; and 4:81–83 characterize instances of hypocritical or unreliable conduct within the community, including the circulation of unverified reports of security or alarm, a practice the verse instructs believers to refer instead to the Messenger and to those of sound judgment among them. The passage closes with exhortations, at 4:85–86, to support good causes through intercession and to respond to greetings with equal or greater courtesy, and at verse 4:87 with a restatement of God's oneness and the certainty of the coming Day of Resurrection.

Ambiguous loyalties after Uhud (4:88–91)

Verses 4:88 through 4:91 address a matter with a clear and specific historical anchor. The passage opens: "What is [the matter] with you [that you are] two groups concerning the hypocrites, while Allah has made them fall back [into error and disbelief] for what they earned..." Ibn Kathir reports that this passage addresses an actual dispute among the Companions concerning a group of people who had initially set out with the Muslims toward the Battle of Uhud but then turned back to Medina, and who were suspected of maintaining ties with the Meccan polytheists despite an outward profession of Islam. Companions divided into two camps: some held

that this group, having effectively sided with the enemy, should be treated as combatants; others held that, absent formal hostility and given their professed faith, they should be spared, particularly since they had not undertaken hijra to join the Muslim community fully. The verses are reported to have settled this internal disagreement, and al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir further discuss the passage's differentiation of hypocrites into distinct categories — those maintaining dual ties with believers and the Meccan opposition, those bound by treaties of non-aggression, and those approaching the Muslims without hostile intent — deriving rules distinguishing circumstances warranting armed action from those requiring restraint. This passage represents one of the more securely attested instances in this juz' of legislation responding directly to a concrete post-Uhud communal crisis, reflecting genuine anxiety within the early Medinan community over the loyalties of its more ambivalent members, and it anticipates, in both theme and vocabulary, the extended treatment of hypocrisy that closes the present segment at 4:138–147.

Killing, warfare-related concessions, and emigration (4:92–100)

Verses 4:92–93 present some of the most severe legislative and moral language in the surah, distinguishing accidental from intentional killing of a believer. Unintentional killing requires expiation — the freeing of a slave and payment of blood money to the victim's family, or, absent the means, a period of consecutive fasting — with the specific expiatory formula varying somewhat depending on whether the victim belonged to a hostile people, an allied non-Muslim people, or the believing community itself, while intentional killing draws the extraordinary condemnation of verse 4:93: "But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment." Classical exegetes record extensive and genuine early disagreement over the implications of this verse: al-Qurtubi surveys at length competing positions among the Companions and Successors as to whether the verse indicates that intentional killing of a believer forecloses the possibility of repentance and forgiveness altogether, or whether it must instead be read alongside other Qur'anic verses affirming God's unrestricted capacity to forgive whatever sin He wills. Ibn Kathir

likewise records this as a contested point rather than a matter resolved with unanimity in the classical tradition — a fact worth noting given how often the verse is invoked in later literature as though its implications were self-evident.

Verses 4:94–96 caution against hastily branding as a disbeliever someone encountered on a military campaign who offers the Islamic greeting, merely for the sake of worldly gain (understood by commentators as war spoils); classical exegetes tie this to an actual combat incident during one of the Prophet's campaigns, though accounts vary in identifying the specific expedition and the individuals involved, and this connection — while genuinely attested in the tafsir literature — should be treated with some caution regarding precise historical identification. The same passage, continuing through 4:95–96, distinguishes in reward between those who remain at home and those who strive with wealth and person, while explicitly exempting from blame the genuinely incapacitated in 4:98–99 — "the weak among men, women, and children who cannot devise a plan nor are they directed to a way" — with verse 4:99 holding that God may well pardon such persons.

Verse 4:100 turns to the question of emigration (hijra) and its spiritual reward: "And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allah will find on the earth many locations and abundance. And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him - his reward has already become incumbent upon Allah..." Tafsir literature, including Ma'arif al-Qur'an, links this verse to the case of a man who set out to emigrate from Mecca to Medina but died along the way, leaving the Companions uncertain whether he had attained the full reward of a muhajir; the individual's identity varies across sources and should be treated with appropriate caution, but the verse is uniformly read as resolving the question affirmatively — the reward of hijra is secured by sincere intention and the undertaking of the journey, independent of whether the emigrant survives to reach his destination.

Wartime liturgical accommodation (4:101–104)

Verses 4:101 through 4:104 introduce concessions specific to conditions of travel and armed conflict: the shortening of the ordinarily obligatory prayers while traveling, particularly where there is fear of attack from disbelievers, and, more distinctively, the detailed procedure for the "prayer of fear" (salat al-khawf), in which the community divides into groups praying in rotation, weapons retained, so that armed readiness is maintained throughout. Verse 4:104 closes the cluster by urging believers not to relent in pursuing an enemy out of weakness, observing that if believers suffer hardship, the enemy suffers correspondingly, while believers additionally hope for something the enemy does not. This liturgical accommodation is not tied by the sources to a single dated incident but rather reflects the general, sustained wartime conditions of the Medinan community in the years following Uhud — a reminder, as much modern historical scholarship on early Islam observes, of how closely intertwined ritual legislation and the practical security concerns of the nascent polity could be during this period.

A judicial dispute and its aftermath (4:105–115)

Verses 4:105 through 4:113 address, according to al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, a specific judicial episode in which a member of the Medinan Muslim community, having stolen from another, cast suspicion for the theft onto an innocent party (in some versions, a Jewish resident of Medina); segments of the accused thief's own community reportedly rallied to his defense before the Prophet, prompting the revelation of verses exhorting impartial judgment even against one's own kin or in-group. Verse 4:105 states this directly: "Indeed, We have revealed to you the Book in truth so you may judge between the people by that which Allah has shown you. And do not be for the deceitful an advocate." The precise identities of the parties involved are reported variably across sources, and this detail should be treated with corresponding caution, though the episode itself — a genuine dispute over false accusation and communal partisanship — is well attested as the occasion for the passage in the tafsir tradition, and it forms a natural companion to the concern with impartial testimony voiced later at 4:135. The passage continues through 4:114–115 with a warning against secret counsel except where directed toward charity, reconciliation, or good, and closes with the statement that whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has

become clear, and follows a path other than that of the believers, will be left to the path he has chosen and delivered to Hell as a final destination.

Theological restatement: shirk, idolatry, and the religion of Abraham (4:116–126)

Verses 4:116 through 4:126 return the surah to core theological themes, opening with a restatement, echoing verse 4:48 earlier in the surah, that God does not forgive the association of partners with Him (shirk) absent repentance, while forgiving whatever lesser sin He wills. Verses 4:117–121 polemicize against idol worship — including, on some readings, worship oriented toward female deities associated with pre-Islamic Arabian cult practice — and characterize satanic promises as delusive, describing Satan's pledge to mislead, to arouse false hopes, and to instigate the mutilation of livestock and alteration of God's creation as characteristic of pre-Islamic custom the verses reject. Verses 4:122–124 offer the reciprocal promise of Paradise to righteous believers, explicitly extending this promise, notably for its egalitarian phrasing, to "whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer," and insisting further that reward is not a matter of mere wishful claims by any faith community but of righteous deed joined to belief. Verse 4:125 holds up the religion of Abraham, as hanif (upright, monotheistic), as an exemplary model for one who submits himself entirely to God while doing good, and the passage closes at 4:126 with an affirmation of God's encompassing knowledge and possession of all things in the heavens and the earth.

Return to orphan legislation and marital reconciliation (4:127–134)

Verse 4:127 opens: "And they request from you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], a ruling concerning women. Say, 'Allah gives you a ruling about them and [about] what has been recited to you in the Book concerning the orphan girls to whom you do not give what is decreed for them - and [yet] you desire to marry them...'" Classical exegetes — al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, al-Qurtubi — connect this verse directly to the surah's opening legislation on orphans (4:2–3), reading it as a clarifying supplement addressing guardians who sought to marry female orphans in their charge without paying a fair dower, or who refused to permit their marriage

elsewhere in order to retain control of their inheritance. Several classical reports attribute a clarifying question on this specific point to 'A'isha, the Prophet's wife, situating the verse within continued Companion inquiry into the practical application of the earlier orphan legislation; as with comparable reports elsewhere in the tafsir tradition, the precise wording and chain of transmission vary somewhat across sources. The passage that follows, at 4:128–130, addresses reconciliation between spouses, permitting a wife who fears ill-treatment or estrangement from her husband to negotiate a settlement between them, and explicitly contemplating that reconciliation may not always succeed and permitting separation as an available outcome — "But if they separate [by divorce], Allah will enrich each [of them] from His abundance." Verses 4:131–133 restate God's universal sovereignty over the heavens and the earth, His counsel to remain conscious of Him regardless of the practice of prior communities, and His capacity to replace any disobedient people with another, and verse 4:134 affirms that reward for righteous conduct is available in both this world and the next, since God hears and sees all things.

The cluster on justice, faith, and hypocrisy (4:135–147)

The segment's closing stretch opens with what is widely regarded, alongside 4:58 and 4:105, as part of a coherent thematic cluster on judicial and testimonial equity within this portion of the surah: verse 4:135, "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted." Classical exegetes such as al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir treat this as a foundational Qur'anic statement of impartial testimony, demanding equity even where it cuts against self-interest or kinship loyalty, and later reformist and academic literature on Islamic legal ethics has frequently cited the verse as an early textual anchor for principles of due process and evidentiary impartiality.

Verse 4:136 follows with a call to firm faith in God, His Messenger, the Book revealed to him, and the earlier scriptures, warning that whoever denies God, His angels, His Books, His messengers, and the Last Day has strayed far

into error; verse 4:137 warns against those who oscillate repeatedly between faith and disbelief, growing only further in disbelief, whom God will not forgive or guide to a way; verses 4:138–139 warn against hypocrites who seek alliance with disbelievers in preference to believers, asking rhetorically whether they seek honor through such alliances when honor belongs to God entirely; verse 4:140 instructs against sitting with those who mock the revealed verses until they turn to different speech, on pain of sharing in their culpability; and verse 4:141 further characterizes the opportunistic loyalties of hypocrites, who claim solidarity with believers in victory and with disbelievers in reversal, asking rhetorically whether they had not sided with the believers all along.

The segment's final movement, verses 4:142–147, offers a closing characterization of hypocrisy that ties back thematically to the discussion of the ambivalent post-Uhud group at 4:88–91. Verses 4:142–143 describe outward, dilatory religious performance — rising to prayer sluggishly, to be seen by people, remembering God only a little, wavering "between the two, neither with these nor with those" — as characteristic of hypocrisy; verse 4:144 warns believers against taking disbelievers as allies in preference to believers, asking whether they wish to give God a clear case against themselves; verses 4:145–146 place hypocrites, absent sincere repentance, correction, and holding fast to God, in "the lowest depth of the Fire," while explicitly offering a path of return to sincere faith and right conduct for those who repent, promising that such believers will be counted among the faithful and rewarded accordingly; and the passage, and this segment of the surah, closes with verse 4:147: "What would Allah do with your punishment if you are grateful and believe? And ever is Allah Appreciative and Knowing." Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir read this closing verse as a summary coda, offering assurance that divine punishment is not an end pursued for its own sake but is contingent upon the persistence of disbelief and ingratitude, in deliberate contrast to the preceding portrait of hypocrisy.

Synthesis

Read as a continuous unit, verses 4:24 through 4:147 exhibit the characteristic texture of the surah's middle portion: dense, situational legislation on marriage, inheritance, and domestic order, interwoven with

material addressing the concrete military and social anxieties of the Medinan community after Uhud, and punctuated by recurring theological restatements on monotheism, justice, and the fate of the sincere versus the hypocritical. Several threads recur across the segment and bind it together thematically — a sustained concern with impartial judgment and testimony (at 4:58, 4:65, 4:105, and 4:135), a preoccupation with the treatment of the vulnerable (orphans, women, and the socially weak, addressed at the segment's opening in 4:24–28, again at 4:127–134, and in the description of the oppressed at 4:75), and a persistent anxiety over the loyalty and sincerity of those within the professed community itself, most visible at 4:88–91 and again in the closing verses on hypocrisy from 4:138 through 4:147. The segment also illustrates, perhaps more clearly than any comparable stretch of the Qur'an, the degree to which certain verses — 4:24 and 4:34 above all — have become sites of sustained interpretive contest, both across the classical Sunni-Shi'i divide and within modern scholarly and translation literature, a fact that later reception history, rather than the classical exegetical tradition alone, brings fully into view. Taken together, the segment reads less as a single sustained argument than as a layered response to a community under strain — legally consolidating its domestic and economic life even as it worked through the military setbacks, ambiguous loyalties, and theological self-definition that had followed directly from the reversal at Uhud.

Juz’ 6: Surah an-Nisa 4:148 — Surah al-Ma’idah 5:81

Surah an-Nisa 4:148 through Surah al-Ma’idah 5:81

Juz' 6 spans the closing movement of Surat an-Nisa' (4:148–176) and the first substantial portion of Surat al-Ma'idah (5:1–81). The section thus straddles two surahs with distinct rhetorical registers: the last pages of an-Nisa continue and close its long meditation on family law, prophetic history, and the theology of the People of the Book, while al-Ma'idah opens a new, notably legal and covenantal surah, generally regarded by the tradition as among the last complete surahs revealed to the Prophet. Read together, this juz' moves from polemical and narrative retrospection on Israelite and Christian religious history toward the consolidation of a communal legal-ethical order — contracts, dietary law, purification, penal provisions — capped by the well-known declaration of the "completion" of religion in al-Ma'idah 5:3. Running throughout is a sustained engagement with Jewish and Christian communities: their scriptural claims, their prophets, their laws, and the proper terms of the believers' relationship to them.

An-Nisa 4:148–152: Public speech and the problem of selective belief

The juz' opens mid-discourse, with a brief passage permitting the public voicing of grievance against wrongdoing (4:148) while urging that good conduct or forgiveness is preferable, and affirming God's own capacity to forgive (4:149). The passage then turns to a more consequential theme:

"Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers and wish to discriminate between Allah and His messengers and say, 'We believe in some and disbelieve in others,' and wish to adopt a way in between... Those are the disbelievers, truly" (4:150–151, Saheeh International).

This is a definitional statement, and exegetes have generally read it as characterizing not a hypothetical position but the historical stance of communities — chiefly the Jewish and Christian communities encountered by the early Muslim community in Medina and the Hijaz — who, in the Qur'anic framing, accepted some prophetic messengers while rejecting others (most pointedly, in the immediate literary context, rejecting Prophet Muhammad,

Peace Be Upon Him while retaining Moses or Jesus). The verse thus articulates a principle central to the Qur'an's self-understanding: prophecy is conceived as a single continuous chain, and selective acceptance of it is tantamount to disbelief in the whole. Verse 4:152 immediately supplies the positive counterpart — those who believe in God and "make no distinction between any of them" will be given their rewards — establishing a binary that frames much of what follows.

An-Nisa 4:153–162: Israelite history as comparative backdrop

This passage rehearses a set of episodes from Israelite sacred history — the request that God be made visible, the golden calf, the raising of Mount Sinai (al-Tur) over the Israelites as a covenantal sign, violation of the Sabbath, and disbelief regarding Jesus and Mary. Representative is 4:154, referencing the covenant taken "and We raised over them the mount for [refusal of] their covenant." The cumulative rhetorical effect, noted by both classical commentators and modern scholars of Qur'anic narrative, is typological: episodes of prior recalcitrance are marshaled as a lens through which to view the present resistance of some in the Medinan Jewish community to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's message. Gabriel Said Reynolds and other scholars working on the Qur'an's engagement with biblical and para-biblical material have discussed this recurring pattern — using inherited narrative material as an argument for the legitimacy of a new prophetic claim — as a structuring feature of Qur'anic salvation-history retrospectives generally, of which this passage is one instance among several across the Qur'an.

An-Nisa 4:157–158: The denial of the crucifixion

Embedded within this historical review is one of the most doctrinally consequential verses in the Qur'an regarding Christian belief:

"And [for] their saying, 'Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.' And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them... Rather, Allah raised him to Himself" (4:157–158, Saheeh International).

The verse denies, in the plainest terms the Qur'an offers on the subject, that Jesus was killed or crucified, attributing the crucifixion instead to a

substitution (shubbiha lahum, "he was made to resemble [another] to them"). The Qur'anic text itself does not specify the identity of the person substituted, and the classical tafsir tradition reflects this indeterminacy rather than resolving it. Al-Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan catalogues a range of narrations on the point — some identifying the substitute as a volunteer among Jesus' disciples, others pointing to the betrayer (identified in some Christian tradition as Judas) — while noting the Qur'an's own silence on the matter and counseling caution against over-specifying beyond the text. Ibn Kathir's tafsir surveys a similarly varied set of reports, several apparently shaped by earlier Christian and Jewish narrative material circulating in late antique and early Islamic milieux (material later scholarship sometimes labels isra'iliyyat when derived from Jewish sources, though comparable material of Christian provenance also seems to be in play here), while likewise emphasizing that the Qur'an's own claim is limited to the denial of death by crucifixion and the assertion that God "raised him to Himself." This verse has, since the medieval period, been a central point of Muslim-Christian doctrinal difference and a recurring subject of interfaith polemic and, more recently, comparative academic discussion, precisely because it contests the central salvific event of Christian theology while leaving its own alternative account underdetermined.

An-Nisa 4:163–170: Prophetic succession and its culmination

The passage that follows situates the revelation given to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him within a chain of prior revelation: "Indeed, We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him..." (4:163), naming Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the tribes, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon, and David (to whom the Zabur, or Psalms, was given). Verse 4:164 adds the notable clause that God spoke to Moses directly (taklim), a locution that has occasioned discussion regarding the mode of divine-prophetic communication and Moses' distinctive epithet, Kalim Allah. This passage functions doctrinally to establish the principle of silsilat al-anbiya' — prophetic succession — undergirding the claim that Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's message is not an innovation but a continuation and confirmation of what preceded it, a claim already anticipated in 4:150–152's condemnation of selective belief. Verses 4:165–

170 press the point further, stressing that messengers were sent as bearers of good news and warning "so that mankind will have no argument against Allah after the messengers," before again addressing the People of the Scripture directly and urging them not to exceed proper bounds in religious claims — a transitional note anticipating the Christological material to come.

An-Nisa 4:171–176: Closing Christology and the final legal ruling

The surah's closing address turns directly to Christians:

"O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah... So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, 'Three'... Exalted is He above having a son" (4:171, Saheeh International).

The verse affirms Jesus' status as messenger and as "a word from Him" cast into Mary and "a spirit from Him" — Qur'anic terms whose theological resonance has attracted extensive comparative attention — while firmly rejecting Trinitarian language ("Three") and divine sonship. The verse exemplifies the Qur'an's characteristic strategy toward Christian doctrine: honoring Jesus' prophetic dignity and his miraculous birth while foreclosing incarnational and Trinitarian conclusions. Although later tradition associates Qur'anic engagement with Christian delegations (notably the Najran delegation) chiefly with Surat Al 'Imran (3:59–61), the Christological material here in an-Nisa reflects the same doctrinal concerns; the connection to Medinan Muslim-Christian encounters is best understood as thematic continuity rather than a documented occasion of revelation specific to these particular verses.

The surah then closes, somewhat abruptly against this theological material, with a return to inheritance law:

"They request from you a[n Islamic] ruling. Say, 'Allah gives you a ruling concerning one having neither descendants nor ascendants [as heirs]...'" (4:176, Saheeh International).

This is the kalala ruling, addressing inheritance shares when a deceased person leaves no direct descendants or ascendants. It rounds off the

extensive inheritance legislation that occupies much of an-Nisa (begun earlier in the surah, outside this juz'). Unusually among the passages of this juz', this verse has a well-attested and specific occasion of revelation: a hadith transmitted in Sahih Muslim, via Jabir ibn 'Abdillah, describes it as revealed in direct response to a question put to the Prophet concerning inheritance in the absence of parents or children — one of the more securely anchored asbab al-nuzul reports in this section of the Qur'an, and one that also serves, by its placement, as a formal close to the surah's legal program.

Al-Ma'idah 5:1–5: Contracts, permitted game, and the completion of religion

Al-Ma'idah opens with a distinctive imperative: "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts" ('uqud, 5:1), establishing a contractual and covenantal register that commentators such as Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, treat as thematically definitive for the surah as a whole — a surah oriented toward consolidating the legal-ethical obligations of a now-established community. The following verses address lawful and unlawful game during the state of ritual consecration (ihram) and prohibit violation of the sanctity of the Ka'ba and pilgrimage rites (5:1–2), before arriving at one of the most frequently cited verses in the Qur'an:

"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion" (5:3, part).

Classical exegesis, especially Ibn Kathir, ties this clause closely to a specific historical moment: reports place its revelation on 9 Dhu'l-Hijjah, 10 AH, during the Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage at 'Arafah. A hadith transmitted in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, via Tariq ibn Shihab, records that a Jewish scholar remarked to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab that had such a verse been revealed to the Jewish community, they would have taken that day as a festival; 'Umar is reported to have replied that it was in fact revealed on two festival days at once — a Friday, and the Day of 'Arafah. This dating situates the verse within one of the last securely documented episodes of the Prophet's life, only months before his death, and Ibn 'Ashur reads the "completion" language less as a mere historical marker than as a structural and thematic culmination of the Qur'an's legal-communal project as a whole.

The same verse (5:3) contains a list of forbidden foods — carrion, blood, swine flesh, animals dedicated to other than God, and several categories of improperly slaughtered or killed animals (strangled, beaten to death, killed by falling, gored, or partly eaten by a predator, unless slaughtered before death) — together with a prohibition on divination by arrows. Al-Qurtubi's al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an devotes considerable attention to this list, setting it alongside the parallel enumeration in Surat al-An'am (6:145) and deriving fiqh positions on exceptions permitted under necessity (darura). Verse 5:5 then extends the dietary provisions by permitting believers to eat the food of the People of the Book and permitting marriage to chaste women from among them, a ruling with substantial and continuing juristic discussion regarding its scope and conditions.

Al-Ma'idah 5:6: Purification law

Verse 5:6 legislates ritual ablution (wudu') in some detail — washing the face, forearms, wiping the head, washing the feet — and provides for tayammum (dry ablution with clean earth) in the absence of water or in illness, paralleling similar legislation earlier in Surat an-Nisa (4:43). As a foundational fiqh text, this verse is regularly read by jurist-exegetes alongside the more procedurally detailed hadith material on wudu' and tayammum found in Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, and Sunan Abu Dawud, which supply practical elaboration that the Qur'anic text itself leaves relatively brief. Verses 5:7–11, often passed over quickly by readers eager to reach the narrative material that follows, reaffirm the covenant taken from the believers and counsel steadfastness and just dealing "even toward a people who hated you" (5:8) — a brief ethical interlude bridging the legal material just given and the extended historical retrospective to come.

Al-Ma'idah 5:12–26: Covenant, the twelve spies, and the wilderness years

This extended narrative passage recalls the covenant taken from the Children of Israel, the appointment of twelve leaders among them, and God's promise of support conditional upon prayer, charity, and belief in the messengers (5:12), followed by a rehearsal of covenant violation (5:13) and comparable dealings with those who call themselves Christians (5:14). The

passage moves to the well-known episode of Moses and the twelve spies sent to reconnoiter the Holy Land, where the Israelites, confronted with a "given people" of great strength, refuse to enter: "Go, you and your Lord, and fight, indeed we are remaining right here" (5:24). The consequence is exile in the wilderness: "Indeed, it is forbidden to them for forty years [in which] they will wander throughout the land" (5:26). Classical and modern readers alike note the didactic function of this narrative — an account of covenant and its breach, obedience refused, and consequence — situated here as part of the surah's broader engagement with Israelite religious history, continuing themes already sounded in an-Nisa 4:153–162.

Al-Ma'idah 5:27–32: The two sons of Adam and the universal principle

The surah then narrates, without naming them, the story of Adam's two sons — understood by the great majority of exegetes to be Cain and Abel — whose differing offerings lead to one being accepted and the other rejected, and culminate in the first killing (5:27–31). Az-Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf treats the passage's grammatical linkage to what follows as significant: the narrative serves as the occasion for the Qur'an's citation of a principle "decreed upon the Children of Israel":

"whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely" (5:32).

Az-Zamakhshari reads the verse's universalizing language as a deliberate rhetorical hyperbole (mubalagha), intensifying the moral gravity of unlawful killing by equating a single act with an offense (or a mercy) against humanity as such. Commentators note the verse's peculiar rhetorical framing — it is presented as a report of what was legislated for the Israelites rather than as a freestanding new law for the Muslim community, a citation strategy that has drawn sustained discussion regarding its function within the surah's argument. Hadith literature in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim elaborating the gravity of taking human life is commonly read by commentators alongside this verse, situating it within broader Islamic discourse on the major sins (kaba'ir).

Al-Ma'idah 5:33–40: Penal legislation

The surah proceeds to some of its most consequential legal material. Verses 5:33–34 prescribe severe penalties — execution, crucifixion, amputation of hand and foot on opposite sides, or exile — for those who "wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption" (hiraba), with an exception for those who repent before being apprehended. Verse 5:35 exhorts believers to fear God, seek a means of nearness (wasila) to Him, and strive in His way. Verses 5:38–39 then prescribe amputation of the hand for theft, again with an allowance for repentance and reform: "But whoever repents after his wrongdoing and reforms, indeed, Allah will turn to him in forgiveness." This penal material has generated substantial juristic discussion across the tradition; al-Tabari and al-Qurtubi both record disagreement, for instance between Kufan and Hijazi legal schools, over the minimum value (nisab) of stolen property necessary to trigger the amputation penalty and the evidentiary conditions for its application — debates preserved within the tafsir literature itself rather than confined to separate legal manuals. Modern scholarship, including work associated with Fazlur Rahman's broader reading of Qur'anic legal material, has characterized this dense penal-legal register of al-Ma'idah as representative of the increasingly consolidated, community-regulating character of the latest phase of Medinan revelation, in contrast with the more foundational theological material of the earlier Meccan surahs.

Al-Ma'idah 5:41–50: Scriptural authority and the standard of divine judgment

This passage turns to a sustained engagement with Jewish and Christian scriptural authority. It criticizes those "hastening into disbelief" among people who "say, 'We believe' with their mouths, but their hearts believe not" (5:41), and addresses rabbis and scholars who fail to forbid wrongdoing (5:44, part). Verse 5:44 states that "We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light," by which the prophets and rabbis and scholars judged, and includes the statement that "whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers." The passage then quotes the Torah's law of retaliation — "a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds is legal

retribution" (5:45) — before turning similarly to the Gospel: "We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel, in which was guidance and light" (5:46). The recurring refrain concerning judgment by revealed law is repeated with variation across 5:44, 5:45, and 5:47 (rendered variously in translation as concerning "disbelievers," "wrongdoers," and "the defiantly disobedient" respectively), a variation that has generated extensive theological and juristic debate — most famously among the Kharijites in early Islamic history, who read such verses as an absolute condemnation of any ruler who failed to govern strictly by revealed law, and in modern times among various reformist and Islamist movements invoking the phrase hukm bi-ghayri ma anzala Allah in political argument. Mainstream exegesis has generally resisted the most totalizing readings, situating the verses within their specific address to Jewish and Christian religious authorities of the time, while acknowledging the broader principle they articulate. The passage culminates in 5:48, describing the Qur'an itself as "a confirmation of what preceded it of the Scripture and a criterion over it" (muhaymin) and affirming that God assigned to every community "a law and a method," followed by exhortations at 5:49–50 to judge according to what God has revealed rather than to follow base desires.

Al-Ma'idah 5:51–66: Alliance, ridicule, and righteous exception

This section addresses the believers' relations with Jewish and Christian communities in a register that requires careful contextual reading:

"O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies (awliya')..." (5:51, part).

The term wali carries a semantic range spanning "ally," "protector," "patron," and "friend," and exegetes including Ibn Kathir situate this verse and its neighbors within specific historical circumstances of alliance-seeking during periods of tension between the Medinan Muslim community and certain Jewish tribes, and involving hypocrites reported to have sought external political alliances in moments of vulnerability. The classical sources do not present a single uniform account of the precise historical occasion, and later jurists have differed on the scope of the verse's application — whether it

addresses a specific political-military context of the time or establishes a broader, standing principle — a matter that remains a subject of ongoing interpretive discussion rather than settled consensus. The immediate literary context (addressing "those who take your religion in ridicule and amusement," 5:57) situates the passage within a broader concern about mockery of the faith and its adherents by hostile factions, rather than as a blanket statement about all individual social relations. The section also contains verses praising righteous exceptions among the People of the Book: verse 5:55 states, "Your ally is none but Allah and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed - those who establish prayer and give zakah, and they bow [in worship]" — a verse whose reference to those who give charity "while bowing" has attracted a well-known, though contested, association in some exegetical traditions, particularly within Shi'i tafsir, with 'Ali ibn Abi Talib; this attribution is not universally accepted across the broader exegetical tradition. Verses 5:59–63 continue the polemical register, criticizing those who reproach the believers for their faith and describing the corruption of "many of them" in transgression and forbidden gain, while verses 5:65–66 pivot once more to qualification: had the People of the Book believed and been righteous, God "would have removed from them their misdeeds" and opened blessings from above and below — a counterfactual of grace that, together with the verses just beyond this juz' at 5:82–83, exemplifies the pattern of qualified rather than blanket characterization recurring across the surah.

Al-Ma'idah 5:67–81: Conveyance, reassurance, and closing Christological critique

Verse 5:67 addresses the Prophet directly on the burden and guarantee of his mission:

"O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people" (5:67, Saheeh International).

Classical commentators, including Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi, relate this verse to a period of heightened concern for the Prophet's personal safety, during which companions reportedly kept watch over him; hadith material, including

a report cited in Sunan al-Tirmidhi, describes the Prophet dismissing his guard after this verse's revelation, understanding it as a divine assurance of protection that simultaneously placed full responsibility for conveying the message upon him regardless of personal risk. The verse thus functions as both reassurance and an intensification of prophetic obligation. Verses 5:68–71 return once more to addressing the People of the Scripture, reproaching those who stand on nothing until they uphold the Torah and the Gospel, and recalling — in terms echoing 4:153–162 earlier in this same juz' — the recurring pattern of Israelite prophets rejected or slain by their own people (5:70).

The juz' closes with a return to sustained Christological argument. Verse 5:72 states: "They have certainly disbelieved who say that Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary," followed by further verses (5:73 and following) rejecting the notion "Allah is the third of three" and reiterating that Jesus and his mother "used to eat food" (5:75) — a detail cited to underscore their creaturely, non-divine nature, in contrast to claims of Jesus' divinity. These verses recapitulate, in the surah's own closing register, the Christological concerns already voiced in an-Nisa 4:171, forming a kind of thematic bracket around the juz' as a whole. Verses 5:76–79 press the argument further with a rhetorical challenge — asking why such objects of devotion have no power to help or harm — and recall the condemnation, transmitted "upon the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary," of Israelite wrongdoers who transgressed and did not forbid one another from wrongdoing (5:78–79), a further instance of the juz's recurring technique of citing prior scripture and prophetic precedent as moral argument. The passage describes varying responses among Jewish and Christian communities to the believers (5:80–81), setting up the following verse (5:82, just beyond this juz's endpoint) which describes Christians as "nearest in affection" to the believers among the categories addressed — a marker that the surah's engagement with these communities is not monolithic but calibrated to differing postures encountered by the early Muslim community.

Synthesis

Juz' 6 is bound together less by a single narrative arc than by a set of recurring concerns that migrate across the seam between an-Nisa and al-

Ma'idah: the theology of prophetic succession and the wrongness of selective belief in it; a sustained, doctrinally pointed engagement with Christian claims about Jesus, culminating in both the denial of the crucifixion (4:157–158) and the rejection of Trinitarian and incarnational language (4:171 and 5:72–75); the deployment of Israelite sacred history as a typological argument for the legitimacy and continuity of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophetic claim; and, especially in al-Ma'idah, the consolidation of a communal legal order — contracts, purification, dietary law, penal law — culminating in the historically anchored declaration of religious completion at 5:3. Scholars working on the Qur'an's chronology and rhetorical development, including those associated with form-critical approaches to the corpus, have characterized this stretch of material, particularly al-Ma'idah, as reflecting the summarizing, self-consolidating posture of a community near the close of its founding prophetic mission — retrospective in its historical argument, yet forward-looking in the durability of the legal and communal framework it lays down. The juz' also illustrates the Qur'an's characteristic combination of firm doctrinal boundary-setting toward the People of the Book with explicit, repeated acknowledgment of righteous individuals among them — a tension, evident from the qualified condemnations of 4:150–152 through the counterfactual grace of 5:65–66, that classical and modern exegesis alike have had to hold together rather than resolve into a single uniform verdict.

Juz’ 7: Surah al-Ma’idah 5:82 — Surah al-An‘am 6:110

Surah al-Ma’idah 5:82 through Surah al-An‘am 6:110

Juz' 7 opens in the closing third of Surat al-Ma'idah (Q5:82–120) and carries through the first hundred and ten verses of Surat al-An'am, one of the longest sustained theological arguments in the Qur'an. The material in this juz' is thematically diverse: a comparative reflection on the dispositions of Jews and Christians toward the believers; a cluster of legal and ethical rulings covering vows of asceticism, oath expiation, the definitive prohibition of wine and gambling, hunting restrictions during pilgrimage sanctity, and pre-Islamic superstitions; a closing meditation on Jesus and the disciples' request for a heavenly table, from which the surah takes its name; and then the opening two-thirds of al-An'am, an integrated cosmological and prophetic argument against polytheism anchored in the narrative of Abraham's reasoning toward monotheism. Across this span the Qur'an moves fluidly between interfaith description, legal legislation, and theological polemic, while maintaining a recurring emphasis on divine unicity (tawhid) as the thread binding the two surahs together.

Q5:82–86: Dispositions of Communities toward the Believers

The juz' begins mid-argument, with a verse that has occasioned extensive discussion both in the classical tradition and in modern comparative religious scholarship:

"You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity toward the believers [to be] the Jews and those who associate others with Allah; and you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, 'We are Christians.' That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant." (5:82)

The verse is notable for the specificity of its causal clause: the relative nearness of Christians in affection is explained not as an unqualified theological endorsement but as a sociological observation tied to the presence of priests and monks and a disposition free of arrogance. Ibn Kathir surveys the range of opinion on the referent of "those who say, 'We are Christians'": some identify the verse with the Negus (al-Najashi) of Abyssinia

and his companions, reportedly moved to tears upon hearing the Qur'an recited by Ja'far ibn Abi Talib during the Muslim emigration there in the Meccan period; others read it as a more general statement about the temperament of Christian clergy encountered by the early community. The following verse reinforces this reading through concrete description: "And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth" (5:83). Scholars working on Qur'anic religious pluralism have noted that this passage sits in evident tension with other, more polemical Qur'anic statements about Christian doctrine (including later verses in this same surah), and that the exegetical tradition itself is divided on whether 5:82 constitutes a general theological verdict or a historically situated remark occasioned by a specific encounter. The seerah linkage to the Abyssinian hijra, while not unanimous among exegetes, is one of the more frequently cited correlations for this passage and reflects the pre-Medinan experience of persecution that shaped the early community's search for a place of refuge.

Q5:87–108: A Cluster of Legal and Ethical Material

The remainder of the surah's legal core addresses several discrete matters in relatively rapid succession, each meriting attention proportionate to its significance rather than uniform verse-by-verse treatment.

The passage opens with a corrective address to excessive asceticism:

"O you who have believed, do not prohibit the good things which Allah has made lawful to you and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors. And eat of what Allah has provided for you [which is] lawful and good, and fear Allah, in whom you are believers." (5:87–88)

The asbab al-nuzul reports, cited by al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir and echoed in hadith collections, describe a group of Companions—named in some narrations as including 'Uthman ibn Maz'un—who reportedly vowed to renounce marriage, meat, and worldly comfort in pursuit of continuous fasting and night vigil. The Prophet is reported to have corrected this tendency, stating in substance that he himself fasts and breaks his fast, prays and sleeps, and marries women, and that "whoever turns away from

my sunna is not of me." The verse thus functions as a rejection of supererogatory self-denial construed as superior piety, establishing moderation as normative rather than incidental.

Verse 89 turns to the expiation (kaffara) required for broken oaths—feeding or clothing ten poor persons, freeing a slave, or, failing capacity, fasting three days—a straightforwardly legal provision requiring little theological comment beyond its role in establishing that oaths carry binding weight tempered by mechanisms of release.

The most theologically and legally consequential unit in this cluster is the prohibition of intoxicants:

"O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. Satan only wants to cause between you animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. So will you not desist?" (5:90–91)

This passage represents the culminating stage of a graduated Qur'anic legislative process. Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir trace the sequence across three revelations: Q2:219, which acknowledges "great sin" alongside "some benefit" in wine without commanding abstention; Q4:43, which prohibits approaching prayer while intoxicated, implicitly restricting but not banning consumption; and finally Q5:90–91, delivered as an unconditional and unequivocal prohibition, paired here with maysir (gambling), ansab (sacrificial stone altars associated with pre-Islamic ritual), and azlam (divining arrows used for decision-making). A hadith preserved in the major hadith collections records 'Umar ibn al-Khattab's repeated supplication, "O Allah, give us a clear ruling concerning wine," a report many exegetes associate with the timing of this verse's revelation—suggesting a community actively seeking closure on a matter of accumulating social harm, including reports of intoxication-related disputes among Companions prior to the final ban. Al-Qurtubi devotes extensive juristic discussion to the definitional scope of khamr, addressing whether the prohibition extends by analogy (qiyas) to all intoxicating substances or remains restricted to grape-derived wine

specifically—a question that continued to generate disagreement among the legal schools well into the classical period. Modern scholarship on Islamic legal history has frequently cited this three-stage sequence as an instance of tadarruj, or graduated legal pedagogy, in which the Qur'an addresses entrenched social practice incrementally rather than through immediate prohibition—a pattern also explicitly recognized within the classical tafsir tradition itself.

Verses 94–96 address the rules of hunting while in the state of ritual consecration (ihram), prohibiting the killing of game during pilgrimage and prescribing compensatory offerings, while permitting the hunting of sea game at all times—material of primarily juristic rather than theological interest, situated within the surah's broader concern for the sanctity of pilgrimage rites. Verse 97 affirms the Ka'ba as "standing for the people" and reiterates the sanctity of the sacred months and ritual markers (hady, qala'id), tying communal legal order to the sacred geography of Mecca.

Verse 100 offers a compact ethical maxim of a different register: "Say, 'Not equal are the evil and the good, although the abundance of evil might impress you.' So fear Allah, O you of understanding, that you may be successful." The verse functions as a general moral principle resisting the seduction of quantitative prevalence as a measure of truth or worth, a theme that recurs throughout the Qur'an's engagement with majority disbelief.

Verses 101–102 introduce a caution against a particular kind of inquiry:

"O you who have believed, do not ask about things which, if they are shown to you, will distress you..."

Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir report that this verse was occasioned by instances of Companions posing provocative or hypothetical questions to the Prophet—among the reports cited are questions about the identity of one's biological father, or repeated inquiries about whether hajj was obligatory every year, the concern being that persistent questioning risked producing binding legal obligations or unwelcome revelations that would complicate rather than ease communal life. Reports cited in this connection caution generally against excessive questioning that could burden the law. The verse thus reflects a distinctive Qur'anic concern with the pragmatics of legal revelation—that

inquiry itself could trigger legislation, and that some questions were better left unasked.

Verses 102–103 turn to a condemnation of specific pre-Islamic Arabian superstitions: the designations bahira, sa'iba, wasila, and ham, terms referring to categories of livestock dedicated or restricted according to pagan customary practice (animals whose ears were slit, or which were freed from work in fulfillment of a vow, or associated with particular breeding patterns deemed sacred). The Qur'an dismisses these designations as fabrications attributed to Allah without divine sanction, part of its broader project of dismantling the ritual apparatus of Arabian polytheism. The passage closes this legal cluster with instructions in verses 106–108 concerning testimony and bequests while traveling, addressing the practical problem of securing reliable witnesses to a dying person's final wishes when no Muslim witness is available, permitting testimony from non-Muslims under specified safeguards including an oath sworn "by Allah" if suspicion of falsehood arises.

Q5:109–120: The Closing of al-Ma'idah and the Table Spread

The surah's concluding section returns to eschatological and Christological register. Verse 109 depicts Allah addressing the messengers collectively on the Day of Judgment, asking what response they received from their peoples—establishing a scene of prophetic accountability that recurs across the Qur'an. This transitions into an extended address to Jesus recounting the favors bestowed upon him: strengthening by the holy spirit, speech in infancy and old age, the teaching of scripture and wisdom, and the miracles of creating a bird from clay, healing the blind and the leper, and raising the dead by God's permission (110). Verses 112–115 recount the episode from which the surah derives its name (al-ma'ida, "the table"): the disciples ask Jesus whether his Lord is able to send down a table of food from heaven, and upon Jesus's prayer, God agrees to send it down as a festival and a sign, with a warning that subsequent disbelief would bring unprecedented punishment. This narrative, distinct from any canonical Gospel episode though sometimes compared to the Last Supper or feeding miracles in Christian tradition, functions in the Qur'anic context primarily as a demonstration of divine

power granted in response to a request for a confirming sign, echoing similar sign-narratives associated with earlier prophets.

The surah then reaches its Christological climax in verses 116–118, a passage of considerable importance in Muslim-Christian theological discussion:

"And [beware the Day] when Allah will say, 'O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, "Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah"?' He will say, 'Exalted are You! It was not for me to say what is not my right. If I had said it, You would have known it... I said not to them except what You commanded me: to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.'" (116–117, condensed)

The passage is structured as a future dialogue in which Jesus explicitly disavows having taught his own or his mother's divinity, attributing to himself only the message of worshipping God alone, and disclaiming any knowledge beyond what God has given him. The theological function of the passage is twofold: it denies the doctrine of Jesus's or Mary's divinity as something Jesus himself propagated, and it frames Jesus as an exemplary servant-prophet whose submission to divine command exemplifies proper creaturely humility. The surah closes at verse 120 with a reassertion of Allah's sovereign dominion over the heavens, the earth, and all that is between them—a fitting doxological close returning the entire surah's legal and narrative material to its theological foundation.

Q6:1–3: The Opening of al-An'am

The juz' then moves into Surat al-An'am, traditionally classified as a late Meccan surah, with some traditions holding that it was revealed in its entirety at once—a report cited to underscore the surah's unusual thematic and rhetorical coherence relative to other lengthy surahs. Some Western scholars of the Qur'an have discussed this integration as evidence of deliberate literary composition, and Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, similarly describes the surah's structure as a sustained, systematically ordered refutation of Meccan polytheism moving through cosmological, prophetic-historical, and eschatological argumentation.

The surah opens:

"[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light. Then those who disbelieve equate [others] with their Lord." (6:1)

The juxtaposition is deliberate: the doxological affirmation of Allah as sole creator of the cosmos and its most fundamental phenomena (darkness and light) is immediately followed by an indictment of those who, despite this, attribute equals to Him. Verse 2 adds a temporal argument—Allah created humanity from clay and decreed a term (ajal), "yet you dispute"—linking creation and mortality as grounds that should produce humility rather than defiance. Verse 3 affirms Allah's singular identity as God "in the heavens and on the earth," knowing what is concealed and what is manifest.

Q6:1–73: Sustained Argument for Monotheism

The opening two-thirds of the surah constitute an extended theological argument combining several recurring strategies: warnings drawn from the destruction of prior disbelieving nations (6:6, 6:42–45), repeated staging and refutation of polytheist rationalizations and demands, discussion of the sending of messengers to both jinn and humankind, insistence on the reality of bodily resurrection against the deniers' skepticism, and vivid depictions of the moment of death (6:93–94 describes souls being taken "with hands outstretched," accompanied by angels, at the point of death, and their return to God "alone, as We created you the first time," stripped of the intercessory partners they once claimed). This eschatological material functions rhetorically to collapse the polytheists' confidence by projecting forward to a moment when their false intermediaries will be shown to have no power at all.

A frequently cited verse within this stretch addresses the scope of divine knowledge:

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it..." (6:59)

Al-Zamakhshari reads this verse's rhetorical structure as establishing an exclusive claim (hasr) to knowledge of the unseen, a reading consistent with his broader Mu'tazili theological commitments, deployed to foreclose any creaturely claim to comprehensive foreknowledge. The verse's cumulative, escalating imagery—leaves, grains in the darkness of the earth, things moist and dry, "all in a clear register"—serves as a rhetorical demonstration of the sheer scope of divine omniscience.

Q6:74–90: Abraham's Argument and the Prophetic Succession

The surah's rhetorical center of gravity, in Ibn 'Ashur's assessment, is the narrative of Abraham's confrontation with his father's and his people's idolatry. The passage opens with a direct address:

"And [mention] when Abraham said to his father Azar, 'Do you take idols as deities? Indeed, I see you and your people to be in manifest error.'" (6:74)

What follows (6:75–79) is Abraham's celebrated contemplative sequence: shown the dominion of the heavens and the earth, he observes a star at nightfall and declares, "This is my Lord," but upon its setting says, "I like not those that disappear." He repeats the pattern with the moon and then the sun, each time initially proposing it as a candidate deity and then rejecting it upon its setting, before concluding:

"Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allah." (6:79)

The classical exegetical tradition, represented here by Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi, debates the epistemic status of Abraham's statements about the celestial bodies: whether they reflect a genuine process of youthful inquiry and discovery (nazar/istidlal) or, as the majority position holds, a rhetorical strategy of argumentation by concession (ilzam/mujadala) directed at his idolatrous interlocutors, a reading motivated by the doctrine of prophetic infallibility ('isma), which most classical scholars regarded as precluding the possibility that a prophet ever genuinely believed in astral deities even temporarily. Some modern thematic-theological readings highlight this passage as paradigmatic of the Qur'an's mode of "natural theology"—its

characteristic reasoning toward monotheism through reflection on observable cosmic phenomena rather than through abstract proof alone—treating Abraham's method as a model for the kind of rational reflection the Qur'an commends to its audience generally.

Verses 80–83 continue the confrontation, with Abraham's people threatening him and Abraham responding that he does not fear their false deities since nothing befalls except by God's will, and that they, not he, should fear having associated partners with Allah "for which He has not sent down to you any authority." The passage concludes with reassurance:

"They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice [shirk] - those will have security, and they are [rightly] guided." (6:82)

This verse, and the identification of zulm (wrongdoing) with shirk in this specific context, became a locus classicus in later exegesis for distinguishing degrees of sin, with shirk marked as the paradigmatic and unforgivable transgression against which lesser wrongs are measured.

Verses 84–86 then present a compressed genealogical and prophetic roll call, naming those given guidance in Abraham's line: Isaac and Jacob, Noah before them, and among his descendants David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Zechariah, John, Jesus, Elijah, Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot—each described as favored above the worlds, guided, and among the righteous. This roll call functions as a compact affirmation of continuity: the argument is that the messengers of the Abrahamic line, across a wide range of historical and narrative contexts, all transmitted the same essential message of monotheism now being reiterated through Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him. The passage requires no verse-by-verse gloss; its significance lies in its cumulative structural function within the surah's larger argument, positioning Abraham as the fountainhead of a single continuous prophetic tradition rather than treating each named figure as requiring individual narrative elaboration at this point in the text.

Q6:91–107: Further Disputation and Divine Transcendence

Verse 91 responds to a specific denial:

"They did not appraise Allah with true appraisal when they said, 'Allah did not reveal to a human being anything.'"

Several reports, cited with varying degrees of scholarly confidence, associate this rebuttal with a particular Jewish interlocutor—named in some narrations as Malik ibn al-Sayf or Finhas—who reportedly denied the reality of revelation altogether; exegetes note, however, that the historical detail behind this attribution is not uniformly or strongly attested across the sources. The verse's substantive theological point stands independent of its precise occasion: that the very act of denying revelation to any human being implicitly denies revelation to Moses as well, an inconsistency the verse goes on to highlight by referencing the scripture Moses brought as "a light and guidance for the people."

Verse 92 affirms the Qur'an as "a blessed Book confirming what was before it," addressed to the "Mother of Cities [Mecca] and those around it," and verse 93 warns severely against fabricating lies against Allah or claiming revelation falsely, describing the agonizing death of such a fabricator in vivid terms. The passage reiterates, in verses 100–103, Allah's incomparability and self-sufficiency:

"They have attributed to Allah partners - the jinn, while He created them - and have fabricated for Him sons and daughters without knowledge. Exalted is He and high above what they describe." (6:100)

This culminates in one of the surah's most theologically weighted statements:

"Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted." (6:103)

This verse became a central proof-text in later Islamic theological controversy over the beatific vision (ru'yat Allah)—whether believers will see God in the afterlife—with different theological schools (Ash'ari, Mu'tazili, and others) offering competing readings of whether "vision perceives Him not" applies universally and eternally or is restricted to worldly, this-life perception, leaving room for an eschatological exception. The verse's pairing of transcendence ("the Subtle") with immanent awareness ("the

Acquainted") captures a characteristic Qur'anic balance between divine incomprehensibility and divine intimacy with creation.

Q6:108–110: Rhetorical Restraint and the Bridge Forward

The juz' closes with a short but ethically significant transitional passage:

"And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus We have made pleasing to every community their deeds..." (6:108)

Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir report that this verse was revealed to restrain Muslims from insulting the idols of the Meccan polytheists, out of concern that such insults would provoke reciprocal insults against Allah born of ignorance and enmity rather than genuine theological reflection. This is a foundational verse in later Islamic discussions of the ethics of interreligious argumentation, establishing a principle of rhetorical restraint even amid a text otherwise engaged in uncompromising theological polemic against polytheism. A small minority within the seerah literature has raised the question of whether this verse (despite the surah's overall Meccan classification) might reflect later, more Medinan-style diplomatic sensibilities, though this remains a marginal and unsettled point relative to the surah's well-attested Meccan dating—a dating that mainstream scholarship of the Qur'an treats as reasonably secure on the strength of both internal content and the classical occasions-of-revelation tradition, notwithstanding minority source-critical suggestions that some legal-sounding material elsewhere in this juz', particularly within al-Ma'idah's legal cluster, may reflect later redactional layering, a view that remains a minority position without wide acceptance.

Verses 109–110 close the juz' with a meditation on the limits of miraculous persuasion: the disbelievers swear solemn oaths that if a sign came to them they would believe, yet Allah's foreknowledge holds that even were such signs to come, "their hearts and their eyes [would be] turned away, as they refused to believe in it the first time" (110). This sets up, just beyond the juz''s boundary, the surah's subsequent discussion of human free will and predestination, functioning as a deliberate bridge into the following unit of argument.

Synthesis

Despite covering the close of one surah and the opening of another, this juz' exhibits a coherent set of preoccupations. Its legal material—the wine prohibition, the correction of excessive asceticism, the dismantling of pagan livestock taboos—illustrates the Qur'an's characteristic mode of graduated, socially embedded legislation, reforming inherited practice rather than issuing law in a vacuum. Its interfaith material, particularly Q5:82–83 and the Christological dialogue of 5:116–118, reflects a nuanced engagement with Jews and Christians that combines sociological observation, theological critique, and rhetorical restraint, resisting easy reduction to either uniform hostility or uncomplicated affirmation. And its theological core, spanning the transition into al-An'am, mounts one of the Qur'an's most sustained and literarily unified arguments for monotheism, using cosmology, prophetic history—epitomized in Abraham's reasoned rejection of astral and idolatrous deities—and eschatology in combination to press its case against shirk. The juz''s closing counsel against insulting others' objects of worship, arriving immediately after the sharpest polemical material in the surah, encapsulates a tension that runs throughout: an uncompromising theological claim to exclusive truth held together with an explicit ethic of restraint in how that claim is pressed upon others.

Juz’ 8: Surah al-An‘am 6:111 — Surah al-A‘raf 7:87

Surah al-An‘am 6:111 through Surah al-A‘raf 7:87

Juz’ 8 opens in the closing third of Surah al-An‘am, where the extended Meccan-era argument against polytheism turns from cosmological and rational proofs toward ethical and legal consolidation, before the surah closes with one of the Qur’an’s most concentrated statements of moral law. The juz’ then crosses into Surah al-A‘raf, whose opening chapters narrate the creation of Adam, the defiance of Iblis, and the human fall and repentance — material that establishes an anthropology of moral accountability that the surah then extends, through a sequence of prophetic "punishment narratives," to the peoples of Noah, ‘Ad, Thamud, Lot, and (beginning here, continuing into the next juz’) Madyan. Read as a whole, the juz’ moves from the ethics of the individual and household to the fate of nations, framing both within a single covenantal relationship between Creator and creature.

The persistence of disbelief despite signs (Q6:111–121)

The final movement of al-An‘am returns to a theme sounded earlier in the surah: that miraculous signs alone do not produce faith where the will to disbelieve is fixed. Verse 111 states that even were Allah to send down angels, cause the dead to speak, and gather everything before them in ordered ranks, the disbelievers "would not believe unless Allah should will." Classical exegetes, including al-Tabari, read this as a rebuttal of the Meccan demand for spectacular proofs (echoing earlier verses in the surah where the polytheists ask for a miracle comparable to those given to earlier prophets), while also raising the theological question of divine will versus human responsibility — a tension the exegetical tradition generally resolves by affirming both divine decree and human accountability without specifying the "how" (bila kayf).

Verses 112–113 describe a psychological and social mechanism of disbelief: "And thus We have made for every prophet an enemy — devils from mankind and jinn, inspiring to one another decorative speech in delusion." This notion of shayatin al-ins wa’l-jinn (satans from among humans and jinn) cooperating to dress up falsehood in attractive rhetoric is treated by exegetes as a general sociological law of prophetic opposition, not confined

to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's Meccan opponents, though the immediate application is clearly polemical, addressing Quraysh's rhetorical campaigns against the Qur'anic message.

The passage then turns to dietary law (Q6:118–121), instructing believers to eat of that over which Allah's name has been mentioned (invoked at slaughter) and to avoid what has not — language tied by al-Qurtubi and other legal-exegetes to disputes between the Muslims and Meccan pagans over the status of carrion and animals not ritually slaughtered. Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi report that some pagans argued, provocatively, that an animal killed by Allah (i.e., dying naturally) should be lawful while one killed by human hands should not — an inversion the Qur'an corrects by anchoring lawfulness to proper invocation and method of slaughter. These verses supply part of the scriptural basis later elaborated in fiqh for rules of dhabiha (ritual slaughter).

The false counsel of "satans" and the reckoning of jinn and mankind (Q6:122–135)

Between the dietary polemic and the catalogue of pagan customs that follows, the surah inserts a shorter but theologically significant unit. Verse 122 opens with a simile — one who was dead and given life, walking among people with a light, compared to one left in darkness unable to emerge — read by commentators as a figure for the contrast between guided belief and unguided disbelief. Verses 123–124 turn to the "criminal ringleaders" (akabir mujrimiha) placed in every town to plot and scheme, and to the demand of some Meccan objectors that they be given a revelation like that given to Allah's messengers — a demand the verse answers by insisting that Allah alone knows where to place His message. Verses 125–127 describe the psychological dimension of guidance and misguidance in terms of the expanding or constricting of the breast (sadr), a metaphor later drawn upon extensively in Sufi and homiletic literature for the phenomenology of faith and doubt.

Verses 128–130 depict an eschatological scene in which jinn and mankind are addressed together, the jinn acknowledging how much they profited from mankind and mankind admitting mutual exploitation, followed by the

rhetorical question — echoed in Surah al-Rahman — "did there not come to you messengers from among yourselves, relating to you My verses?" This passage is generally read as affirming that the obligation of response to prophetic warning extends, in some form, to jinn as well as to human beings, a point later elaborated in discussions of Surah al-Jinn (72). Verses 131–132 state the principle that Allah does not destroy communities unjustly while they remain heedless of a warning, and that each will have degrees according to their deeds — a restatement of proportionate divine justice that anticipates the closing verses of the surah. The unit closes (133–135) with an assertion of Allah's self-sufficiency and capacity to replace disobedient peoples with others, and a challenge to the disbelievers to "work according to your position; indeed, I am working," a formula of confrontation preparing the ground for the catalogue of pagan customs in the verses that follow.

Pagan livestock designations and infanticide (Q6:136–150)

A dense polemical passage catalogs specific pre-Islamic Arabian religious customs. Verses such as 6:138–139 describe livestock categories — commonly identified in tafsir as bahira (a she-camel whose ear was slit and which was set free after bearing a certain number of offspring), sa’iba (an animal freed as a votive offering to a deity), wasila (with variant rulings depending on the sex of offspring born), and ham (a stud camel exempted from work once it had sired a certain number of young) — all dedicated to idols or hedged with taboos unconnected to genuine revealed law. The Qur'an characterizes these as fabrications falsely attributed to Allah: "and they say, 'This is [exclusively for] Allah,' by their claim" (paraphrasing the sense of 6:136), a fabrication the passage repeatedly condemns as ignorance (jahl) rather than genuine religious law.

Interwoven with this is a renewed condemnation of infanticide "out of poverty" and "foolishness without knowledge" (6:137, 6:140) — understood by exegetes to refer to the practice, documented in the sira and pre-Islamic historical memory, of killing infant daughters, and in some cases sons, from fear of poverty or social shame. The repetition of this theme (it recurs almost verbatim later in the same surah, at 6:151, within the "ten commandments" passage) signals its gravity in the Qur'an's moral reordering of Arabian society.

Verse 6:146 recalls dietary prohibitions specific to the Children of Israel — the forbidding of animals with claws and of the fat of cattle and sheep except what adheres to their backs, entrails, or bone — explicitly framed as a punishment for their wrongdoing ("that We recompensed them for their injustice," in the sense of the verse). Exegetes read this alongside parallel material in Surah al-Nisa’ and Surah al-Nahl (16:118) as establishing that certain Mosaic dietary restrictions were penal rather than intrinsic to creation, a point used polemically to argue that Islamic dietary law, by contrast, represents a return to an original, less encumbered lawfulness.

Q6:151–153: the concentrated ethical-legal core

This passage is treated by the classical and modern traditions alike as one of the most important condensed ethical statements in the Qur'an, sometimes described in scholarship (echoing its structure) as a Qur'anic "ten commandments." The text proceeds as a numbered sequence of divine prohibitions and commands:

"Say, 'Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited to you. [He commands] that you not associate anything with Him, and to parents, good treatment, and do not kill your children out of poverty; We will provide for you and them. And do not approach immoralities — what is apparent of them and what is concealed. And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden [to be killed] except by [legal] right. This has He instructed you that you may use reason.'" (6:151)

The sequence opens, characteristically, with tawhid — the prohibition of shirk — before moving immediately to filial piety, then to the prohibition of infanticide (again explicitly tied to economic fear, with the reassurance "We will provide for you and them"), then to sexual immorality "apparent and concealed" (understood by exegetes as covering both public and private transgression), and finally to the sanctity of human life, restricted only by legitimate legal cause (understood in later fiqh as covering just retribution, execution under due process, or lawful warfare). The refrain "that you may use reason" ('aqala) marks this as an appeal to rational moral cognition rather than merely to authority.

Verse 152 continues: prohibitions against approaching the property of the orphan except in the best manner until they reach maturity, the command to give full measure and weight in justice, and the statement that "We do not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity" — a principle of proportionate moral responsibility frequently cited in later discussions of Islamic legal theory (taklif). The verse adds: "and when you speak, be just, even if [it concerns] a near relative," extending impartiality even against family loyalty, and closes with a renewed call to fulfill the covenant of Allah, "that you may remember."

Verse 153 delivers the passage's rhetorical climax: "And this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous." A report transmitted concerning Ibn Mas‘ud (cited in the hadith and tafsir literature) describes the Prophet illustrating this verse by drawing a straight line in the sand with branching lines diverging from it, identifying the straight line as the path of Allah and the branches as competing ways that lead away from it — an illustrative, hadith-transmitted elaboration rather than a strict historical occasion of revelation, since the underlying verses are understood as addressing accumulated Meccan-era ethical failures rather than one discrete incident.

Fazlur Rahman, among modern interpreters, singles out this passage as central evidence for a coherent Qur'anic ethical core — the sanctity of life, honesty in dealing, filial devotion, and sexual restraint — which he treats as logically and theologically prior to the more elaborated legal superstructure built up in later fiqh. Traditions preserved in the hadith literature (with some variation in exact wording and chains across the reports) reflect an early recognition of this passage's status as a memorized ethical summary taught to companions and children alike, underscoring its perceived comprehensiveness within a short space.

Divine justice and the closing of al-An‘am (Q6:154–165)

Verses 154–157 pivot to scripture-history, recalling that the Torah was given to Moses as a completion of favor upon those who did good, and as detailed guidance and mercy, lest the Meccan Arabs claim that revelation was sent

only to two communities before them (understood as Jews and Christians) and that they themselves were unaware of what was recited. This is a recognizably apologetic move, addressing a plausible objection from the Meccan audience — that they could not be held to a standard they had never received — by asserting the Qur'an's continuity with, and confirmation of, prior revelation, thereby removing that excuse.

Q6:160 states the passage's culminating axiom of retributive proportion: "Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgement] with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof [to his credit], and whoever comes with an evil deed will not be recompensed except the like thereof; and they will not be wronged." This asymmetry — reward multiplied tenfold, evil repaid only in equal measure — is repeatedly invoked in later theological literature as an epitome of divine justice tempered by mercy, a structural feature built into the very economy of judgment rather than an arbitrary grace.

The surah closes (6:161–165) with the Prophet instructed to declare that his prayer, sacrifice, life, and death belong to Allah, "Lord of the worlds," alone, without partner, and that he is commanded to be "the first of the Muslims" — read by exegetes as a personal seal of the surah's tawhid-centered argument. The final verse, describing humanity as successors (khala'if) on the earth with differing ranks as a trial, closes al-An'am on the same providential and testing register with which portions of the surah began.

Surah al-A'raf opens: creation, prostration, and the fall (Q7:1–25)

Al-A'raf begins with disjointed letters and a brief prologue announcing the revelation's purpose as warning and reminder, before turning, at verse 11, to the narrative that will anchor the surah's opening argument: the creation of Adam and the command to the angels to prostrate before him.

"[Allah] said, 'What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?' [Iblis] said, 'I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay.'" (7:12)

This exchange is foundational in the exegetical tradition for diagnosing the precise nature of Iblis's sin. Both al-Tabari and az-Zamakhshari treat Iblis's response not as simple disobedience but as disobedience compounded by a

flawed act of reasoning — an illegitimate analogy (in later terminology, qiyas ma‘a al-fariq, an analogy drawing a false parallel) in which Iblis assumes that the nobility of fire over clay as substances necessarily entails his own superiority over Adam, disregarding the divine command that overrides such material comparison. This moment is read as the archetype of arrogance (kibr) grounded in self-referential rational pride rather than submission to command, a theme that recurs as a moral warning against reasoning that exalts the self against explicit revealed instruction.

Verses 13–18 narrate Iblis's expulsion and his request for respite until the Day of Resurrection, granted by Allah, followed by Iblis's oath to besiege humanity "from before them and behind them, from their right and their left" (7:16–17) — a formulation distinctive to al-A‘raf's telling (compared to the parallel accounts in Surah al-Baqara 2:30–39 and Surah Ta-Ha 20:115–124), emphasizing the comprehensiveness of Satanic temptation as directed at every dimension of human life and disposition. Allah's response affirms that Iblis and those who follow him will be expelled, "disgraced and expelled" (7:18).

The narrative then turns to Adam and his spouse in the Garden, the prohibition against a particular tree, Satan's whispering that the tree was withheld from them only to prevent them from becoming angels or immortals (7:20), his oath of sincere counsel to deceive them (7:21), and their eating from the tree, the exposure of "their private parts" and their attempt to cover themselves with leaves of the Garden (7:22) — details that classical exegesis, and comparative scholarship, note as running parallel to, yet distinct in emphasis from, the Genesis narrative (for instance, the Qur'anic account nowhere assigns primary blame to Eve, and both Adam and his spouse act and repent jointly).

The pivotal verse of repentance follows: "They said, 'Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.'" (7:23). Exegetes consistently draw the contrast here between Adam's model of immediate, humble repentance — acknowledging wrongdoing and appealing to divine mercy — and Iblis's earlier refusal to acknowledge fault, instead justifying his disobedience through self-comparison. Ibn ‘Ashur, writing in the modern period, situates

this contrast within the surah's broader rhetorical strategy: establishing a paradigm of accountability and repentance that implicitly refutes the Meccan polytheists' excuse that their inherited idolatrous customs were themselves an unimpeachable ancestral tradition — since even the father of humanity, upon erring, repented rather than defended his error as legitimate custom. Verses 24–25 then narrate the expulsion of Adam, his spouse, and Iblis to the earth, "an abode and enjoyment for a time," with the promise that from it they would be brought forth again — closing the narrative on the note of earthly trial that anticipates the surah's subsequent ethical address to "the children of Adam."

Address to the children of Adam: clothing, misguidance, and eschatology (Q7:26–53)

The narrative gives way to direct didactic address. Verses 26–27 speak of the "garment" (libas) Allah has sent down to cover nakedness and as adornment, noting that "the garment of righteousness — that is best," while warning against being deceived by Satan as he expelled the first parents from the Garden, "removing from both of them their clothing to show them their private parts" — an explicit thematic link back to the fall narrative just recounted.

Verse 31 addresses ritual practice directly: "O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess." The asbab al-nuzul literature — cited by al-Wahidi and repeated by Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi — links this verse to a reported pre-Islamic custom in which some tribes performed the tawaf (circumambulation) around the Ka‘ba unclothed, on the notion that garments worn during ordinary or sinful life were unfit for the rite. Al-Qurtubi, consistent with his legal-exegetical method in al-Jami‘ li Ahkam al-Qur’an, draws from this verse rulings concerning appropriate dress during prayer, treating it as a scriptural basis for covering the body (‘awra) in worship, alongside the more general injunction against excess (israf) in eating and drinking, which later fiqh and ethical literature extend broadly to questions of consumption and moderation.

Verses 28–33 also condemn the practice of attributing invented religious customs to Allah's command ("Say, Allah does not command immorality... do you say about Allah that which you do not know?") and affirm that Allah has only truly forbidden immoralities, sin, unjust aggression, associating partners with Him without sanction, and speaking about Allah without knowledge (7:33) — effectively a second, compressed ethical-legal statement echoing the structure of 6:151–153 though more briefly.

Verse 34 states the principle of a fixed communal term ("for every nation is a [specified] term; when their time has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it]"), introducing the theme of national/communal accountability that structures the destruction narratives to follow later in the surah.

Verses 36–39 depict the mutual recrimination of the people of the Fire, followers blaming the leaders who misled them and being told by Allah that punishment is doubled for both, since each bears responsibility — the followers for succumbing, the leaders for leading astray. This leads into the passage's famous simile of impossibility:

"Indeed, those who deny Our verses and are arrogant toward them — the gates of Heaven will not be opened for them, nor will they enter Paradise until a camel enters into the eye of a needle..." (7:40)

Classical exegetes devote considerable lexical attention to the word rendered "camel" (jamal), noting a minority reading or interpretive tradition that takes the term (in a variant vocalization, jummal) to denote a thick ship's rope rather than the animal, though the majority reading and rhetorical force of the verse — depicting a categorical impossibility — favor "camel," paralleling a broadly similar figure of speech attested in other religious literatures for expressing the impossible. Either reading serves the same function: an emphatic, proverbial denial that the arrogant deniers of Allah's signs will ever enter Paradise.

The passage then balances this severity with a portrait of the People of Paradise (7:42–43), who are shown entering with hearts purified of rancor, rivers flowing beneath them, and expressing gratitude that "Allah guided us; and we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us." This leads

to the dialogue structure distinctive to al-A‘raf: an exchange between the People of Paradise and the People of the Fire (7:44–45), followed by the introduction of the People of al-A‘raf — "the Heights" — the group after whom the surah is named (7:46–49). The Heights are described as an elevated barrier (hijab) between the two groups, from which men recognize each of the two parties "by their marks," calling out to both, and to whom the classical tradition — reflected across several tafsir works — attributes an intermediate spiritual status, most commonly explained as belonging to those whose good and evil deeds are precisely balanced, delaying their final disposition until Allah's mercy determines their entry into Paradise. The unit closes (7:50–53) with the People of the Fire pleading for water or provision from the People of Paradise, who reply that Allah has forbidden both to the disbelievers who took their religion as amusement and were deluded by worldly life — a final rebuke reinforcing the surah's insistence that the Day of Judgment vindicates warnings previously dismissed.

Cosmology and the rain-parable (Q7:54–58)

Verse 54 states a theologically pivotal cosmological claim: "Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne (istawa ‘ala al-‘arsh)..." continuing to describe the night covering the day, the sun, moon, and stars subjected by His command, and asserting that creation and command belong to Him alone. This verse is a central proof-text in later theological debate over the divine attributes. Az-Zamakhshari, writing from a broadly Mu‘tazili rationalist orientation in al-Kashshaf, tends to read istawa metaphorically, as denoting sovereignty and dominion over the Throne rather than a literal mode of "sitting" or physical establishment, out of concern to avoid any implication of divine corporeality. Ibn Kathir and other Athari-leaning exegetes, by contrast, affirm the verse's wording as a real divine attribute while explicitly declining to specify its modality (the formula bila kayf, "without asking how"), regarding both outright literalist anthropomorphism and rationalist metaphorical dissolution as departures from the position of the earliest generations (al-salaf). This divergence exemplifies a broader and recurring fault line — between Ash‘ari/Maturidi/Athari affirmationist approaches and Mu‘tazili-influenced rationalist ones — running through classical commentary wherever the

Qur'an employs language suggestive of divine attributes with apparent bodily or spatial connotation.

Verses 55–56 counsel supplication "in humility and privately," and warn against corruption on earth after its reformation, urging fear and hope together, since "the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good." Verses 57–58 then offer an extended nature parable: Allah sends winds as heralds of mercy before rain, which revives dead land, "and thus will you be brought forth [from the dead]" — an explicit analogical argument for bodily resurrection grounded in an observable seasonal phenomenon, a rhetorical device recurring across the Qur'an wherever resurrection is defended empirically rather than solely by appeal to divine power in the abstract. The passage closes with a brief simile contrasting good and bad soil in their response to rain, likened to the difference between grateful and ungrateful souls.

The prophetic destruction narratives begin (Q7:59–87)

With verse 59, the surah turns to a sequence of prophetic missions to specific peoples, each following a recognizable pattern: a prophet sent from among the people themselves, calling them to worship Allah alone and abandon what they worship besides Him, warning of a "great Day," rejection by the community's elite (typically its "chiefs," al-mala’), and eventual destruction, usually accompanied by a specific miraculous sign contested or dismissed by the unbelieving leadership. Scholars of Qur'anic literary form, following earlier work by Josef Horovitz and developed further in more recent scholarship (including that associated with Nicolai Sinai), have described this recurring cycle as a distinct Qur'anic genre — sometimes termed the "punishment narrative" or "Straflegende" — functioning homiletically to place Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's own mission and the Meccan elite's rejection of it within a continuous prophetic history stretching back through recognized antecedents.

Noah's mission (7:59–64) opens the sequence: he calls his people to worship Allah alone, is accused by the chiefs of being in manifest error, responds that he bears a message from his Lord and only wishes to advise them, and is ultimately vindicated when the people who denied him are drowned, while

he and those with him in the ship are saved. Hud's mission to ‘Ad follows (7:65–72), structurally parallel — the summons to worship Allah alone, the chiefs' accusation of foolishness, Hud's rejection of any charge of foolishness and his assertion that he brings a message from the Lord of the worlds, followed by the destruction of ‘Ad by (elsewhere in the Qur'an specified as a violent wind) while Hud and the believers are delivered.

Salih's mission to Thamud (7:73–79) introduces a specific miraculous sign: the she-camel of Allah, presented as "a sign for you," with the instruction to let her graze freely on Allah's earth and not touch her with harm, "lest a painful punishment seize you" (7:73). The passage recounts Thamud's arrogant self-satisfaction in their material achievements — "carving houses out of mountains" — before the community hamstrings the she-camel in defiance, provoking their destruction by a violent earthquake/seizure (rajfa), leaving them "fallen prone in their homes" (7:78), after which Salih turns from them declaring that he had conveyed his Lord's message and given them sincere advice, "but you do not like advisers" (7:79) — a formulaic closing lament echoed in the other narratives of this cycle.

Lot's mission (7:80–84) is introduced with the charge that his people commit "the immorality" (al-fahisha) as none before them in creation had done — understood by the exegetical tradition to refer to same-sex relations among men — with Lot's people responding by demanding his and his followers' expulsion from the town on grounds that they consider themselves "people who keep themselves pure," a retort the Qur'an frames ironically, since it inverts the moral valence of purification. Lot and his family, except his wife (who remains behind and shares the fate of the destroyed), are delivered before a devastating "rain" is sent upon the town, closing with the exhortation "see how was the end of the criminals" (7:84).

The juz’ concludes partway through the mission of Shu‘ayb to Madyan (7:85–87), which will continue into the following juz’. Shu‘ayb calls his people to worship Allah alone and warns them specifically against dealing fraudulently in measure and weight (7:85) — a distinct emphasis among these narratives, reflecting Madyan's identity as a trading community — and against corrupting the earth after its reformation, and against sitting upon every path threatening and hindering from the way of Allah those who believe,

seeking to make it crooked (7:86). Verse 87 closes the juz’ with Shu‘ayb's appeal to patience: "And if there is a group among you who has believed in that with which I have been sent, and a group that has not believed, then be patient until Allah judges between us, and He is the best of judges" — a note of forbearance amid division that leaves the narrative poised for its continuation.

Synthesis

Juz’ 8 traces a deliberate arc from the concrete ethics of everyday life — filial piety, the sanctity of life, honest dealing, sexual restraint, and the rejection of invented religious custom, most concentrated in the "ten commandments" passage of Q6:151–153 — to the foundational anthropology of human moral agency dramatized in the creation, fall, and repentance of Adam and the defiance of Iblis in Surah al-A‘raf's opening chapters. The contrast between Iblis's self-justifying arrogance and Adam's humble repentance functions as a paradigm underlying the juz’'s subsequent material: the address to "the children of Adam" on clothing, moderation, and the peril of following Satan; the cosmological affirmation of divine sovereignty in Q7:54, a verse whose theological interpretation would divide later schools of Qur'anic exegesis over questions of the divine attributes; and finally the opening sequence of prophetic punishment narratives, which extend the individual drama of temptation and repentance onto the level of whole communities, each tested through a specific prophet and sign, each held accountable to a fixed term. Read together, the ethical, narrative, and theological threads of this juz’ converge on a single insistent claim recurring across both surahs in different registers: that guidance has been made clear, that human beings — individually and collectively — bear genuine responsibility for their response to it, and that neither inherited custom nor rhetorical self-justification (of the kind Iblis first modeled) can substitute for the humble acknowledgment of wrongdoing exemplified by Adam's prayer of repentance.

Juz’ 9: Surah al-A‘raf 7:88 — Surah al-Anfal 8:40

Surah al-A‘raf 7:88 through Surah al-Anfal 8:40

This ninth portion of the Qur'an spans the closing movement of Surah al-A'raf (7:88–206) and the opening forty verses of Surah al-Anfal. The juxtaposition is instructive: al-A'raf's conclusion belongs to the Qur'an's later Meccan phase and is dominated by extended prophetic narrative — the Shu'ayb-Madyan episode, the long Musa-Fir'awn cycle, reflections on human nature and covenant, and a closing polemic against idolatry — while al-Anfal's opening belongs to the earliest Madinan period and addresses, in terse legal and hortatory prose, the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Badr. Read together, the two halves of this juz' offer a compact illustration of the stylistic and thematic shift traditionally associated with the Meccan and Madinan phases of revelation, moving from the register of warning-through-history to the register of communal legislation and military reflection.

The close of the Shu'ayb narrative (7:88–102)

The final movement of the Madyan account picks up the confrontation between the prophet Shu'ayb and the notables of his community. Having rejected his call, the elite threaten expulsion: they tell Shu'ayb and those who believe with him that they will be driven out of the town unless they return to "our religion" (7:88). Shu'ayb's response combines a rejection of returning to unbelief with a plea for divine judgment between the two parties, and this is followed by the familiar Qur'anic pattern of a sudden seizure — an earthquake (rajfah) that leaves the people "fallen prone in their homes" (7:91), echoing the fate visited earlier in the surah upon the peoples of Nuh, Hud, and Salih. The passage then broadens into a general reflection on the fate of communities that reject their messengers (7:94–99), observing that Allah tests nations with hardship and then ease so that they might be humbled, and warning that divine seizure often comes unexpectedly, "in the morning while they were at play" (7:98) — a phrase repeatedly invoked by commentators to underscore the theme of complacency preceding sudden reckoning. Verses 100–102 close this unit with a rhetorical question addressed to those who inherit the land after previous generations: has it not become clear to them that had Allah willed, He could seize them too for their

sins? The passage notes that most of these nations were found to break their covenants and that most were found to be defiantly disobedient (fasiqin). This entire unit functions as a coda to the surah's earlier cycle of punishment-narratives (sometimes discussed under the label Straflegenden in scholarship associated with Nöldeke's chronological approach to the Qur'an), reinforcing the pattern already established with Nuh, Hud, Salih, and Lut before turning to the far longer treatment of Musa.

The Musa-Fir'awn cycle (7:103–171)

This is the longest sustained narrative unit in the juz', and it warrants block treatment given its length, though certain verses are pivotal enough to merit isolated attention.

The cycle opens with Musa's commissioning and his confrontation with Fir'awn and his court (7:103–126). Musa presents his staff and hand as signs; Fir'awn's chiefs (mala') respond by characterizing Musa as a knowledgeable sorcerer seeking to expel them from their land (7:109–110), and propose summoning every skilled magician to contest him (7:111–112). The famous reversal follows: when Musa's staff swallows what the magicians have produced, the magicians themselves fall down in prostration, declaring belief in "the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Musa and Harun" (7:120–122), even as Fir'awn threatens them with crucifixion and mutilation for believing without his permission (7:123–124). Their declared indifference to this threat, expressing hope that their end would be as Muslims (submitters), is treated by exegetes as a striking instance of sudden, decisive conversion within the narrative economy of the surah — sorcerers summoned to defeat a prophet instead become his first Egyptian converts.

The narrative proceeds through Fir'awn's obstinacy and the escalating plagues (flood, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood, 7:130–135), read by the Qur'an as signs meant to prompt repentance but which the Egyptians treat as mere sorcery each time relief is granted, reneging on their promises. The Exodus and the crossing of the sea occupy 7:136–137, briefly stated relative to the fuller treatment such episodes receive elsewhere in the Qur'an (e.g., Surah Ta Ha, Surah al-Shu'ara). Verse 137 notes Allah's fulfillment of His promise to the "weakened people" (al-mustad'afin) by making them inheritors of the

eastern and western parts of the blessed land, a verse often read alongside the Qur'an's broader theme of reversal of fortunes for the oppressed.

A notable episode follows in 7:138–140: having crossed the sea, the Israelites pass a people devoted to idols and ask Musa to make for them a god like the gods those people have. Musa's rebuke — that they are an ignorant people, and that what those idolaters practice will be destroyed — anticipates the Golden Calf episode still to come and is frequently read by commentators as demonstrating a persistent susceptibility to idolatry among the Israelites despite their recent liberation from Fir'awn's idolatrous state cult.

Verses 142–145 narrate Musa's forty-night appointment at Mount Sinai (or al-Tur), during which he leaves Harun in charge of the people. This sets the stage for one of the juz's most theologically significant verses:

Q7:143: "And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord, show me [Yourself] that I may look at You.' [Allah] said, 'You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.' But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, 'Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers.'"

This verse has occupied a central place in Islamic theological discussion regarding the vision of Allah (ru'yat Allah). Ibn Kathir treats Musa's request not as an expression of doubt but as an outgrowth of the intimacy of the preceding divine address — having been spoken to directly, Musa's eagerness led him to ask for the further favor of sight. The mountain's leveling under the divine self-disclosure (tajalli) is read by Ibn Kathir as demonstrating the incapacity of any created thing to bear direct theophany within the conditions of this world, a limitation the exegetical tradition contrasts with reports (preserved in hadith literature) describing believers beholding Allah in the Hereafter, where the constitution of existence differs. Musa's declaration "I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers" is understood not as repentance from a sin but as a recognition of the impropriety of the request relative to what is possible in worldly existence, coupled with an affirmation of faith. The episode as a whole has

served as a scriptural anchor in later kalam debates between theological schools affirming a beatific vision in the Hereafter and those denying any visual apprehension of the divine under any circumstance, though such systematic debates postdate the verse itself by centuries.

The tablets (alwah) are then given to Musa, "containing instruction and explanation for all things" (7:145), and Musa is commanded to hold to them firmly and command his people to take the best of them. Verses 146–147 introduce the theme of divine "turning away" of the arrogant from His signs — those who reject the signs and the meeting of the Hereafter will find their deeds nullified.

The Golden Calf narrative follows in 7:148–156. In Musa's absence the people, prompted by al-Samiri (named explicitly in the parallel account in Surah Ta Ha, though not by name here), fashion a calf from their ornaments which "lows" and which they take as a god, described by the Qur'an as manifestly unable to speak to them or guide them to any way (7:148). Verses 150–154 depict Musa's return, his anger at both his people and his brother Harun (whom he seizes by the head and beard before Harun explains his helplessness in the face of the people's revolt), and Musa's subsequent prayer for forgiveness for himself and his brother. Verse 155 recounts Musa selecting seventy men for an appointed meeting, who are then seized by a tremor, prompting Musa's intercessory prayer questioning whether Allah would destroy them for the deeds of the foolish among them alone (7:155) — a passage exegetes often read as modeling prophetic intercession and the principle that divine trial is not indiscriminate collective punishment for the sins of a few. The unit closes with Musa's prayer in 7:156 asking for good in this world and the next, and the divine response that His mercy encompasses all things but will be prescribed specifically for those who are conscious of Him (muttaqin), give zakah, and believe in His signs — followed immediately by 7:157's description of "the unlettered prophet" whom they find written in the Torah and the Gospel, a verse of considerable importance in Muslim exegetical tradition as a scriptural anticipation of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophethood, though this reading engages complex questions of intertextuality that fall outside the immediate narrative of Musa.

The cycle's final episodes (7:159–171) address the twelve tribes' provision of water from the rock (echoing an episode narrated more fully in Surah al-Baqarah), followed by the account of "the town by the sea" (7:163–166): its inhabitants transgressed the Sabbath by devising a means to catch fish that appeared openly on the Sabbath day but hid on other days, testing the prohibition through subterfuge. Those who violated it were changed into "despised apes" (qiradah khasi'in), a fate the Qur'an presents alongside a scene of some among the people questioning why others bother admonishing those Allah is about to destroy or punish severely — the admonishers answer that they do so as an excuse before their Lord and in the hope that the offenders might yet be conscious of Him. The traditional identification of this town with Eilat or Aylah on the Red Sea rests on exegetical and asbab traditions rather than an explicit Qur'anic toponym, and should be understood as a received identification rather than a settled historical fact. The cycle closes with 7:168–171 describing the dispersal of the Israelites into communities, some righteous and some not, and a further reference to Mount Sinai being raised over them "like a canopy" as a sign of the seriousness of the covenant obligations they had accepted — understood by commentators in connection with the Torah's commandments.

The primordial covenant (7:172–174)

Emerging from this long narrative, the surah turns abruptly to a metaphysical register with one of the Qur'an's most discussed verses:

Q7:172: "And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we have testified.' [This] - lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, 'Indeed, we were of this unaware.'"

This is the scriptural basis for what later tradition calls the mithaq or "Day of Alast" (from the Arabic a-lastu bi-rabbikum, "Am I not your Lord?"). Al-Tabari's commentary surveys a range of transmitted reports, some influenced by isra'iliyyat material, describing a literal pre-existence event in which the entirety of Adam's progeny was extracted from his loins — likened in some reports to small ants — and made collectively to testify to Allah's

lordship before being returned to await their appointed births. Al-Tabari also preserves an alternative, more metaphorical reading in which the verse describes not a discrete historical event but the innate disposition (fitra) instilled in every human being, an inborn capacity for recognizing and affirming divine lordship that functions independently of external instruction. Notably, al-Tabari does not force a resolution between these readings, presenting both as received possibilities. Modern academic engagement, including that of Fazlur Rahman, has taken particular interest in this verse as a text bridging Qur'anic anthropology and its argument for innate human accountability prior to the arrival of revelation — the verse functions rhetorically to preempt any claim of ignorance on the Day of Judgment, whether read as describing an actual pre-temporal covenant or as a mythopoeic expression of the fitra's innate moral awareness. Verses 173–174 continue this argumentative thread, addressing the objection that one might otherwise blame ancestral polytheism ("our fathers associated partners with Allah before us") as an excuse for one's own shirk.

The parable of the one who clung to the earth (7:175–177)

A brief but striking parable follows, describing a man given signs (ayat) who then "stripped himself of them," was pursued by Satan, and became one of those gone astray. Had Allah willed, the verse notes, He would have raised him by those signs, "but he clung to the earth and followed his own desire" (7:176), and is likened to a dog that pants whether left alone or driven away — a simile the Qur'an offers as an example for reflection. Later exegetical tradition frequently associates this figure with a person named Bal'am b. Ba'ura, a scholar or seer among the Israelites said to have been given knowledge but who ultimately supported wrongdoers against Musa's people. It is worth noting, however, that this identification is not made explicit in the Qur'anic text itself, and al-Tabari records multiple, sometimes conflicting, identifications transmitted through different chains — a point careful commentators treat with appropriate caution, distinguishing the parable's clear moral lesson (the peril of abandoning knowledge in favor of worldly desire) from the less certain question of its specific historical referent.

Human origin and the closing polemic against idols (7:178–198)

Verses 178–186 continue the theme of divine guidance and misguidance introduced by the Bal'am parable, observing that whoever Allah guides is truly guided and whoever He leaves astray finds no helper, and describing those "created for Hell" — possessed of hearts, eyes, and ears that fail to comprehend, hear, or see — as being like cattle or further astray, a passage exegetes read as characterizing willful rather than involuntary unbelief. This section also includes the reminder that Allah's are the most beautiful names (al-asma al-husna, 7:180), an assertion of a righteous community that guides by truth and establishes justice by it (7:181), and warnings against those who deny the signs, framed through the image of a gradual, imperceptible "leading on" (istidraj, 7:182–183) toward ruin. Verses 184–186 press the Meccan audience to consider whether their own companion (the Prophet) shows any sign of madness, and note that whoever Allah sends astray has no guide.

Verses 189–190 then turn to human origin "from a single soul" (nafs wahidah), from which its mate was made, and describe a couple who, upon conceiving, initially turn to Allah in gratitude but then — in the case of some among their descendants — ascribe partners to Him when a healthy child is granted, a passage read as a caution against superstitious practices surrounding childbirth. The surah's final movement (7:191–198) mounts a direct polemic against the impotence of idols: they create nothing and are themselves created; they cannot help their worshippers or even help themselves; addressed with speech, they will not hear or answer, "and if you call them to guidance, they will not follow you" (7:193). The passage taunts idolaters to call upon their idols and see if they can respond, observing that the idols "have feet but walk not," hands but grasp not, eyes but see not, ears but hear not (7:195) — an escalating rhetorical inventory of impotence that serves as the surah's summative case against polytheism before its closing verses (7:204–206) turn to instructions on listening attentively when the Qur'an is recited and on remembering Allah with humility, closing the surah on a note of the angels' ceaseless glorification.

The ethical maxim of 7:199

Between the parable material and the closing polemic sits one of the most frequently cited verses in the entire surah for its concise ethical content:

Q7:199: "Take what is given freely, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant."

Al-Qurtubi transmits a widely cited tradition in which Jibril is reported to have explained this verse to the Prophet as a comprehensive statement of moral conduct (encompassing leniency toward people, enjoining recognized good, and disengaging from confrontation with the ignorant rather than escalating dispute), prompting the Prophet to request further elaboration from Jibril; as with much material of this kind, the report should be read as illustrating the verse's traditional reception rather than as settled historical record. Al-Qurtubi situates the verse within the Qur'an's broader ethic of social forbearance and leniency, and later exegetes have consistently treated it as a foundational maxim of prophetic character (linking it, for instance, to descriptions of the Prophet's conduct in Madinan and Meccan contexts alike), even though the verse's own literary context is the close of the Meccan-period polemic against idolatry rather than any specific narrated incident.

Surah al-Anfal: the opening ruling on spoils (8:1–4)

The transition to Surah al-Anfal marks one of the most pronounced stylistic shifts within the Qur'anic corpus, moving from extended Meccan narrative to compact Madinan legislative and hortatory address. The surah opens by addressing a concrete dispute:

Q8:1 (paraphrased structure): they ask about al-anfal (the spoils of war); say, the spoils belong to Allah and the Messenger, so be conscious of Allah and amend relations among yourselves, and obey Allah and His Messenger if you are believers.

This opening is widely reported, via Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and preserved in collections such as Sunan Abi Dawud (with some variation across chains), to have been revealed amid disagreement among the Muslims over the distribution of booty following the Battle of Badr, with reports describing Sa'd's own claim to a sword he had taken. The verse resolves the dispute by removing the matter from individual claim and placing authority over the spoils' distribution with Allah and His Messenger. Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, situates this ruling within the broader project of establishing communal discipline and cohesion among the still-fragile early Muslim

community in Madina, noting that the material dispute over booty threatened to fracture the unity so recently forged through the victory at Badr.

What follows is a deliberate rhetorical pivot, moving from legal ruling to a portrait of authentic faith:

Q8:2–4: "The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely - The ones who establish prayer, and from what We have provided them, they spend. Those are the believers, truly..."

Ibn 'Ashur reads this juxtaposition as a deliberate strategy: the legal question about spoils is answered, but the surah immediately redirects attention to the spiritual disposition that should render such disputes over worldly gain secondary — true believers are marked by the internal state produced by remembrance and recitation, by reliance on Allah (tawakkul), by the maintenance of prayer, and by spending from what they have been given, rather than by contention over the distribution of gains. This passage stands as one of the Qur'an's several concise, positive definitions of iman as an operative, describable disposition rather than a bare cognitive assent.

The Badr narrative (8:5–19)

Verses 5 onward turn to an extended retrospective on the Battle of Badr itself — among the most direct and sustained engagements anywhere in the Qur'an with a specific, datable episode of the Prophet's biography. The passage recalls that the Prophet's departure from his home "with the truth" was disliked by a faction among the believers (8:5–6), who argued about the matter "after it had become clear," suggesting some hesitancy among a portion of the Muslim force regarding confrontation once battle became likely. Verse 7 recalls Allah's promise that one of the two parties — the unarmed caravan (led, per widespread report, by Abu Sufyan) or the armed relief force from Mecca — would fall to them, and notes that the believers wished for the less heavily armed party while Allah intended to establish truth through His words and to cut off the disbelievers' root, indicating that engagement with the Meccan army rather than mere interception of the

caravan became the actual course of events. Ibn Kathir's commentary compiles hadith material describing the marked numerical disparity between the two forces and reports of the Prophet's urgent supplication before the battle, pleading for victory given the smallness of the Muslim contingent — material connected by exegetes to:

Q8:9: reference to "when you called upon your Lord for help, and He answered you, 'Indeed, I will reinforce you with a thousand of the angels, following one another.'"

Ibn Kathir identifies this angelic reinforcement with reports attributed to companions such as Ibn 'Abbas describing angelic participation in the battle. Verse 11 recalls the sending of drowsiness as a security from Allah and the sending of rain to purify the believers, strengthen their footing, and remove the "evil suggestion of Satan" from them — read as addressing the practical hardships (thirst, uneven terrain) faced by the smaller Muslim force before engagement. Verses 12–14 describe the instruction to the angels to make firm those who believed and to cast terror into the hearts of the disbelievers, with instructions concerning striking "upon the necks" and "every fingertip" — martial language that exegetes situate strictly within the context of the active battle rather than as general prescription, followed by verses (8:15–16) forbidding the believers from turning their backs in battle except as a tactical maneuver or to join another company, under threat of return with Allah's anger.

The theological high point of this unit is:

Q8:17: "And you did not kill them, but it was Allah who killed them, and you threw not, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], when you threw, but it was Allah who threw..."

This verse is connected by exegetes and hadith transmitted (via al-Tirmidhi and others, with varying chain quality) to a specific incident in which the Prophet is reported to have thrown a handful of pebbles or dust toward the Quraysh ranks during the battle. Az-Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf gives close attention to the verse's rhetorical structure — a negation (nafy) immediately followed by an affirmation (ithbat) applied to the very same act — reading this pattern as illustrating that the Prophet's instrumental act of throwing

was genuinely real and attributable to him as an agent, yet simultaneously subordinate to, and encompassed within, a more fundamental divine causation that determined the act's efficacy and outcome. This verse subsequently became a frequently cited proof-text in later kalam discussions of qadar (divine decree) and the relationship between human agency and divine causation, engaged by theological schools with differing accounts of how human acts relate to divine power, though such systematic theological elaboration represents a later development built upon the verse rather than its immediate historical context. Verses 18–19 close the unit by addressing the disbelievers directly: if they sought a verdict (a taunt reportedly directed at Abu Jahl's invocation before the battle asking Allah to grant victory to whichever party was more in the right), a verdict has now come to them, and if they cease their hostility it will be best for them, but if they return the divine response will likewise return, and their gathered numbers will avail them nothing.

Ethical and parenetic material (8:20–28)

This section shifts from historical retrospective to direct exhortation. It warns believers against turning away from the call "while you hear" (8:20), and criticizes those who say "we have heard" while not truly hearing, likened to "the worst of moving creatures in the sight of Allah" who are deaf and dumb and do not use reason (8:22–23) — language exegetes read as addressed to hypocrites and obstinate disbelievers among the surrounding population rather than to sincere believers generally. Verse 24 issues a striking summons: "O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life," a phrase widely read as referring to the vitality — spiritual and communal — offered through adherence to revelation and prophetic guidance, coupled with a reminder that Allah intervenes between a person and his heart and that all will be gathered to Him. Verse 25 warns:

Q8:25: reference to "a fitnah (trial/affliction) which will not strike those who have wronged among you exclusively."

This verse is frequently invoked in Islamic ethical and political discourse as a warning that communal wrongdoing or the failure to enjoin good and forbid

wrong can bring consequences upon a community broadly, not merely upon the specific wrongdoers within it — a principle of collective responsibility for the moral health of the community. The passage continues by recalling the believers' earlier weakness and fear in Mecca before Allah gave them refuge, strengthened them with His help, and provided for them from good things (8:26), before turning to a warning against betraying the trusts (amanat) placed in them and against betraying Allah and the Messenger "while you know [it is wrong]" (8:27) — understood broadly as a caution against breach of covenant and confidentiality, particularly relevant to a community engaged in ongoing negotiation and low-intensity conflict with external parties. The section closes (8:28) with the reminder that wealth and children are but a trial (fitnah), and that with Allah is a great reward.

Address to the Meccan opposition (8:29–40)

The surah's closing unit in this juz' returns to direct address of the disbelieving Meccan leadership. Verse 29 promises that if the believers are conscious of Allah, He will grant them a criterion (furqan) to distinguish truth from falsehood, remove their misdeeds, and forgive them. Verse 30 recalls a plot devised against the Prophet:

Q8:30: reference to the disbelievers plotting "to restrain you, kill you, or expel you."

This verse is traditionally linked by many exegetes to the Meccan leadership's deliberation — often associated with the assembly at Dar al-Nadwah — over whether to imprison, kill, or exile the Prophet shortly before the Hijra, though it is worth noting, as some careful scholars caution, that the precise connection of this specific verse to that particular council meeting rests on exegetical inference and traditional reports of varying chain-strength rather than an explicit, uncontested textual statement. Verses 31–32 recall the disbelievers' dismissive claim that the Qur'an is merely "tales of the former peoples" and their mocking prayer for Allah to bring immediate punishment upon them if the message is indeed true, "or bring us a painful punishment" — a challenge answered in verse 33 with the observation that Allah would not punish them while the Prophet remained among them, nor while they sought forgiveness. Verses 34–35 address the disbelievers'

obstruction of access to the sacred mosque despite not being its rightful guardians, and famously characterize their worship there as hollow ritual:

Q8:35: their prayer at the House is described as nothing but "whistling and clapping of hands" (muka'an wa tasdiyah).

This description is read by commentators as a polemical characterization of pre-Islamic Meccan ritual practice at the Ka'ba as devoid of the sincerity and content proper to worship, offered in contrast to the substantive prayer described earlier in the surah's portrait of true believers (8:2–4). The passage continues (8:36–37) describing the disbelievers' spending of wealth to obstruct the path of Allah, predicting this expenditure will become a source of regret and ultimately of loss, with the wicked to be gathered into Hell so that the corrupt may be separated from the good. The unit — and this portion of the juz' — closes with a conditional call:

Q8:38–40: if the disbelievers cease [their hostility], what has already passed will be forgiven them; but if they return [to fighting/aggression], "the precedent of the former peoples has already taken place" — invoking the pattern of past nations' destruction familiar from al-A'raf's earlier punishment-narratives — with instruction to fight them until there is no more fitnah (persecution/discord) and religion is entirely for Allah, and, should they cease, that Allah sees well what they do.

Synthesis

Taken as a whole, this juz' moves from the extended prophetic exempla of Meccan-style narrative — the destruction of Madyan, the long Musa cycle with its pivotal theophany at Sinai, the Golden Calf, and the metaphysical covenant of 7:172 — into the concrete legal and martial concerns of the earliest Madinan community following Badr. Several threads bind the two halves despite their contrasting registers: both are concerned with the consequences of covenant-breaking (the mithaq of 7:172 and the amanat of 8:27 are structurally parallel, one metaphysical and one social-political); both invoke the pattern of sudden divine reckoning against communities that persist in wrongdoing (the "morning while they were at play" of 7:98 finds its echo in the warning of 8:38 that "the precedent of the former peoples has already taken place"); and both offer concise, memorable definitions of right

conduct amid larger narrative or legal material — 7:199's maxim of taking what is given freely and enjoining good, and 8:2–4's portrait of the believer's inner disposition. The observation, common in academic scholarship, of an abrupt Meccan/Madinan stylistic transition at the surah boundary is well illustrated by this juz' specifically, offering a compact case study in how the Qur'an's mode of address shifts from historical exemplum addressed to a besieged Meccan prophet and his small following, to communal legislation and battlefield theology addressed to a fledgling but now militarily tested polity in Madina — a movement from the deep past invoked as warning to the immediate past reflected upon as instruction, both bound together by a consistent theology of covenant, testing, and accountability.

Juz’ 10: Surah al-Anfal 8:41 — Surah at-Tawbah 9:92

Surah al-Anfal 8:41 through Surah at-Tawbah 9:92

Juz' 10 opens in the middle of Surah al-Anfal's retrospective on the Battle of Badr and carries through the closing section of that surah's legal material on spoils, treaties, and communal bonds, before turning to Surah at-Tawbah (also called Bara'ah), whose opening chapters this juz' covers through verse 92. Thematically, the juz' moves from the aftermath of Badr (2 AH) through the diplomatic rupture with Meccan polytheism after the conquest of Mecca (8 AH), the jizyah provisions governing relations with the People of the Book, and finally into the extended treatment of the Tabuk expedition (9 AH), the Prophet's last major military undertaking, with its accompanying exposure of hypocrisy (nifaq) within the Medinan community. Legal, theological, and narrative material are closely interwoven throughout, reflecting the increasingly consolidated political position of the Muslim community in this late Medinan period.

Surah al-Anfal, verses 41–48: Badr revisited — spoils and providence

The juz' begins mid-surah with one of the most consequential legal verses in the Qur'an. Q 8:41 states: "And know that whatever thing you gain, a fifth of it is for Allah, for the Messenger, for the near relatives, orphans, the needy, and the [stranded] traveler, if you have believed in Allah and in that which We sent down to Our Servant on the day of criterion – the day when the two armies met." This verse establishes the khums, the mandatory fifth of battlefield spoils (ghanimah) reserved for communal and charitable purposes, with the remaining four-fifths distributed among the fighters themselves according to rules elaborated earlier in the surah and in subsequent fiqh. Ibn Kathir identifies "the day of criterion" (yawm al-furqan) with Badr, fought on 17 Ramadan 2 AH, the day God distinguished truth from falsehood through the community's improbable victory. Al-Tabari records that early authorities differed on the precise apportionment of the khums among the five named categories—Allah and the Messenger being read together as a single administrative category in most juristic treatments—reflecting genuine early legal diversity rather than a settled consensus reached at the moment of revelation. The verse thus stands as the qur'anic

root-text for the entire subsequent fiqh of ghanimah, though its practical elaboration continued to develop through the early legal schools.

The surrounding verses (8:42–48) return to the providential narrative of Badr already treated earlier in al-Anfal, emphasizing the tactical improbability of the encounter—the disposition of the two forces at opposite ends of the valley, the small numbers of the Muslims relative to the Meccan force—read as evidence of divine orchestration rather than mere military calculation. Verses 45–46 counsel steadfastness (thabat) in battle, constant remembrance of God, and above all the avoidance of internal discord: "and do not dispute and [thus] lose courage and [then] your strength would depart." This admonition against tanazu' (mutual dispute) recurs as a structural concern across the Medinan corpus, where communal cohesion is treated as a precondition for external success.

Q 8:49–54: the pattern of divine requital

This short passage recalls the contempt in which the hypocrites and the Meccan disbelievers had held the small Muslim force before Badr, and situates their subsequent defeat within a broader providential pattern in which nations are punished for ingratitude and covenant-breaking. Verse 53 draws the pattern into a general theological principle: God does not change a blessing bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. The passage draws an explicit analogy to the fate of Pharaoh's people, a recurring qur'anic type for arrogant power humbled by divine judgment.

Q 8:55–64: treaty-breakers and the calculus of peace

This passage addresses the practical problem of dealing with parties who violate treaties (verses 55–58) and counsels vigilance against anticipated treachery, while also establishing—at verse 60—one of the most frequently cited verses on military readiness: "And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy." This verse has been read across the tradition, and in modern commentary, as a general principle of deterrence (i'dad, or preparedness) rather than an incitement to aggression, and it is immediately followed, at verse 61, by an instruction that qualifies any impression of

unconditional belligerence: "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah." The juxtaposition of 8:60 and 8:61 is important to the passage's balance—readiness for conflict is paired with an explicit openness to peace whenever the other party offers it, a pairing regularly stressed by commentators concerned to resist a one-sided reading of either verse alone.

Q 8:65–69: the calculus of endurance and the Badr captives

Verses 65–66 address the expected ratio of steadfastness in battle, first stating that a resolute company of twenty could overcome two hundred, and ten could overcome a thousand, then—in what is widely read as a mitigation—revising the ratio downward: "now Allah has lightened [the hardship] for you, and He has known that there is weakness among you. So if there are from you one hundred [who are] steadfast, they will overcome two hundred." This adjustment is generally read as an acknowledgment of the community's still-developing capacities.

Verses 67–69 turn to the treatment of prisoners of war, opening with a rebuke—"It is not for a prophet to have captives [and kill them] until he inflicts a massacre [upon Allah's enemies] in the land"—that the exegetical and hadith tradition ties closely to a documented disagreement among the Companions after Badr. Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim preserve narrations describing the difference of opinion between Abu Bakr, who favored accepting ransom for the captives, and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, who favored their execution as enemies who had shown the community no quarter; the Prophet is reported to have inclined toward Abu Bakr's position, and the ransoming of most Badr captives proceeded, with these verses subsequently understood as bearing on the propriety of that choice. The passage closes (8:69) by permitting the community to consume what had been taken as lawful and good, "and fear Allah."

Q 8:70–75: ransom, walayah, and the surah's legal coda

The closing section of al-Anfal addresses the ransom of captives directly (8:70–71), then turns to a foundational statement on mutual guardianship (walayah) among believers, distinguishing three categories: the Meccan emigrants (muhajirun) who fought and emigrated with their wealth and

persons; the Medinan helpers (ansar) who gave them shelter and aid; and believers who had not emigrated, whose walayah with the first two groups is qualified until they do so, except in matters of religion if they seek help against persecution (8:72). Verse 75 extends this circle to later converts who emigrate and fight alongside the community, and closes with a statement on inheritance priority: "those of [blood] relationship are more entitled to inheritance in the decree of Allah." This closing passage functions as a kind of constitutional statement on the emerging structure of the Medinan polity—distinguishing tiers of communal belonging while insisting that all are bound together as believers—and brings al-Anfal to its close.

Surah at-Tawbah, verses 1–6: the Bara'ah declaration

At-Tawbah opens with a textual peculiarity noted throughout the tradition: it is the only surah in the Qur'an transmitted without the opening Bismillah. Az-Zamakhshari and al-Qurtubi record a range of explanations offered by early authorities—that the surah is, thematically or even textually, a continuation of al-Anfal rather than a wholly separate composition; that the Bismillah connotes a covenant of peace and safety inappropriate to a declaration terminating treaties; or more simply that the Uthmanic scribes found no explicit Prophetic instruction to insert it there. Both commentators stress that no single explanation achieved universal agreement even among the earliest authorities, and modern source-critical scholarship (building, for instance, on Angelika Neuwirth's compositional approach) has treated the omission as possible evidence of an original literary or redactional continuity between the two surahs, a view that intersects with, without simply repeating, the classical discussions.

The opening verse reads: "Freedom from obligation (declared) by Allah and His Messenger to those with whom you had made a treaty among the polytheists." This is the Bara'ah (disavowal/dissociation) proclaimed toward Meccan and Arabian polytheist tribes whose treaties had been violated or were suspected of violation following the conquest of Mecca in 8 AH. Verse 2 grants a four-month grace period ("So travel freely, [O disbelievers], throughout the land for four months") during which no hostilities would commence, allowing affected parties to reconsider their position or make arrangements. Classical sources (Ibn Kathir, al-Qurtubi) narrate that the

proclamation was first entrusted to Abu Bakr as leader of the Hajj delegation in 9 AH, after which 'Ali ibn Abi Talib was sent to deliver the declaration publicly—a widely repeated report, transmitted with some variation in its precise details, understood to reflect a custom that solemn treaty announcements of this gravity were properly delivered by the Prophet himself or by a member of his own clan rather than by proxy alone.

Verse 4 immediately qualifies the scope of the declaration: it is directed at those who had violated their treaties, "except for those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything or supported anyone against you." Such faithful treaty partners are to have their agreements honored to their term. This qualifying clause is essential to how classical exegetes (Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari) and later scholars such as Ibn 'Ashur have read the passage as a whole: as a historically and diplomatically bounded response to specific treaty violations among specific Arabian tribes, not a categorical, permanent policy toward non-Muslims generally.

Verse 5, sometimes called the "Sword Verse" in later polemical and some scholarly literature, reads: "And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." Both Ibn Kathir and al-Tabari insist that this verse cannot be read in isolation from its immediate qualifying context: verse 4's exception for faithful treaty-partners, and verse 6's provision that "if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah [i.e., the Qur'an]. Then deliver him to his place of safety." Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, situates the entire Bara'ah passage within the specific diplomatic collapse of Quraysh-allied treaties after the conquest of Mecca, treating it as circumstantial (bound to its occasion, sabab-specific) rather than an atemporal general injunction—a reading that runs parallel to, without being identical to, more recent historical-critical caution (noted, for instance, in surveys such as those of Gabriel Said Reynolds) against treating the verse as either a timeless universal command or as abrogating the Qur'an's more

conciliatory passages wholesale. Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading of the Qur'an similarly cautions against extracting free-standing legal maxims from such verses without attention to their concrete socio-political and diplomatic setting.

Q 9:7–24: further elaboration and the Sacred Mosque

Verses 7–16 continue to address the treatment of treaty-breakers, framed by rhetorical questions contrasting hollow claims to piety with actual conduct, and by verse 17 the discussion turns to who may properly maintain and administer the Sacred Mosque in Mecca: "It is not for the polytheists to maintain the mosques of Allah [while] witnessing against themselves with disbelief." Verses 19–22 press the point further, arguing that the customary Quraysh pride in providing water to pilgrims and maintaining the Sacred Mosque cannot be equated with belief and striving in God's cause; genuine standing before God, the passage insists, belongs to those who believe, emigrate, and struggle (jihad, in its broad sense of exertion) with wealth and person. This section culminates in one of the surah's most frequently cited verses, 9:24: "Say, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your relatives, wealth which you have obtained, commerce wherein you fear decline, and dwellings with which you are pleased are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger and jihad in His cause, then wait until Allah executes His command.'" The verse functions as a broad statement of priority rather than a specific legal ruling, subordinating the natural attachments of kinship, property, and commerce to religious commitment.

Q 9:25–27: Hunayn

A brief but historically specific passage recalls the Battle of Hunayn, fought in Shawwal 8 AH against the Hawazin and Thaqif tribes shortly after the conquest of Mecca: "Allah has already given you victory in many regions and [even] on the day of Hunayn, when your great numbers pleased you, but they did not avail you at all, and the earth was confining for you with its vastness; then you turned back, fleeing." The verse records that the Muslims' initial confidence in their unusually large numbers led to early disarray in the face of a well-prepared ambush, before God's aid ("His tranquility," sakinah,

and reinforcing forces) turned the encounter and secured eventual victory. The episode functions rhetorically within the surah as a caution against attributing military success to sheer numerical strength.

Q 9:28–35: pilgrimage restrictions, jizyah, and religious critique

Verse 28 bars polytheists from approaching the Sacred Mosque after "this year of theirs," traditionally identified with the pilgrimage season of 9 AH, on the grounds of their ritual impurity (najas), while providing for the community's economic concern that this exclusion not impoverish Mecca ("if you fear privation, Allah will enrich you from His bounty, if He wills").

Verse 29 then addresses relations with the People of the Book directly: "Fight those who do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture – [fight] until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled." This is the foundational qur'anic text for the later, extensively elaborated law of the jizyah (a tribute or tax paid by non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic polity in exchange for protection and exemption from military service) and the broader fiqh al-dhimma governing the status of Jewish and Christian communities under Muslim rule. Al-Qurtubi devotes extended legal discussion to the conditions, rate, and manner of collecting the jizyah, treating this verse as its qur'anic root-text; later classical jurisprudence built an elaborate structure of rights and obligations upon this base, though the specifics of rate and application varied across schools and periods. Academic treatments such as Fazlur Rahman's caution against abstracting the verse's terms from their seventh-century Arabian diplomatic setting into timeless universal legal maxims without qualification.

Verses 30–31 turn to a theological critique, addressing distinctive Jewish and Christian beliefs (respectively, in the verses' phrasing, that Ezra/'Uzayr and Christ are "the son of Allah") and criticizing the veneration in which some communities held their rabbis and monks: "They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah, and [also] the Messiah, son of Mary." The verse is understood by commentators not as a claim that Jews and Christians formally worshipped their religious leaders, but as a critique of uncritical

deference that grants human religious authorities powers of legislation properly belonging to God alone—a reading supported by an accompanying hadith tradition (outside the immediate tafsir corpus but frequently cited in connection with this verse) in which the Companion 'Adi ibn Hatim, a former Christian, is told that such "taking as lords" consisted in obeying scholars' rulings that contravened revealed law, not literal worship.

Verses 34–35 close the passage with a condemnation of hoarding: "those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah – give them tidings of a painful punishment," describing a day when such wealth will be heated in the fire of Hell and used to brand the hoarders' foreheads, sides, and backs, a passage frequently invoked in later Islamic economic and charitable ethics.

Q 9:36–37: the sacred months and nasi'

A short passage reaffirms the sanctity of four months in the Arabian calendar as "the correct religion" (al-din al-qayyim) established since creation, and condemns the pre-Islamic practice of nasi' (postponement), whereby the sacred months were reordered or shifted from year to year to accommodate seasonal warfare and other convenience, described here as "an increase in disbelief."

Q 9:38–72: the Tabuk passage

This is the longest sustained passage in the juz', occasioned by the Prophet's call in Rajab 9 AH for an expedition to Tabuk in the north, prompted by rumored Byzantine mobilization, undertaken during a period of intense summer heat and at a difficult point in the harvest season. The campaign proved historically significant less for combat—the army reached Tabuk but did not engage Byzantine forces—than as a test of communal loyalty, and the surah's extended rebuke of reluctance reflects that function.

Verse 38 opens the reproach directly: "O you who have believed, what is [the matter] with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allah, you adhere heavily to the earth? Are you satisfied with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter?" Verses 39–42 press the point, warning that failure to go forth will not harm God, who is capable of replacing the

community with another people, and noting the disproportion between the true believers who exert themselves "with their wealth and their lives" (9:41) and those who, given ease and available means, still swore false excuses.

Within this same reproach, verse 40 stands out as a pivotal, theologically dense statement, offering the Qur'an's only reference to the Hijrah cave episode: "If you do not aid the Prophet – Allah has already aided him when those who disbelieved had driven him out [of Makkah] as one of two, when they were in the cave and he said to his companion, 'Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us.' And Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and supported him with angels you did not see and made the word of those who disbelieved the lowest, while the word of Allah – that is the highest." Ibn Kathir and al-Tabari transmit the standard narrative identifying "the cave" as that of Thawr, south of Mecca, and "his companion" as Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, during the Hijrah of 622 CE, when the two men hid from pursuing Quraysh search parties before proceeding to Medina. The verse is notable both for its brevity and for being the sole qur'anic textual anchor for what became one of the most narratively elaborated episodes in the sira literature.

Verses 43–59 then turn from this recollection to exposing the hypocrites' excuses and habitual pattern of deception—a theme the surah will resume later, at 9:107–110, in describing a mosque subsequently constructed by hypocrites for divisive purposes and known as Masjid al-Dirar. That later material falls just beyond this juz', but it belongs to the same continuous exposure of hypocrisy that runs through the whole Tabuk passage.

Verse 60 provides the foundational enumeration of zakat recipients: "Zakah expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect [zakah] and for bringing hearts together [for Islam] and for freeing captives [or slaves] and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the [stranded] traveler – an obligation [imposed] by Allah." The eight categories—fuqara' (poor), masakin (needy/destitute), 'amilin (zakat administrators), mu'allafat qulubuhum (those whose hearts are to be reconciled), riqab (slaves seeking freedom), gharimin (debtors), fi sabilillah (in God's cause), and ibn al-sabil (stranded travelers)—became foundational to the entire subsequent structure of Islamic charity law (fiqh al-zakat). Several tafsir works record this verse as revealed in response to complaints,

including in some reports from hypocrites, about how the Prophet was distributing charity, prompting this explicit and exhaustive enumeration to forestall further dispute.

Verses 61–66 record the hypocrites' habitual mockery and slander, including reference to those who claimed, when confronted, that they had merely been "conversing and playing" (9:65)—an episode later commentators associate with specific named individuals, though the details are transmitted with some variation—and God's rejoinder that such excuses are unacceptable: "Say, 'Was it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?' Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after your belief." Verses 67–68 then set out a symmetrical description of hypocrite men and women, "some of them of others," commanding wrong and forbidding right and withholding their hands from charity, contrasted directly in verses 71–72 with a matching description of believing men and women who enjoin right, forbid wrong, establish prayer, give zakah, and obey God and His Messenger —one of the surah's clearer statements of gender-parallel religious obligation and communal responsibility.

Q 9:73–89: further denunciation, broken vows, and the funeral prayer

This section intensifies the critique of hypocrisy through several specific vignettes. Verses 75–78 recount the case of a man who vowed that, if God enriched him from His bounty, he would surely give charity and be among the righteous, but who reneged once wealth was granted him: "So He penalized them with hypocrisy in their hearts until the day they will meet Him." Popular tafsir literature most commonly identifies this individual as Tha'labah ibn Hatib al-Ansari, though several hadith critics and later scholars have questioned the strength of the chain underlying that identification, so it is more accurately presented as a widely circulated but contested attribution rather than a settled historical fact.

Verse 79 addresses mockery directed at believers who gave charity according to their limited means, alongside mockery of others who gave generously, showing that no measure of the community's giving satisfied hypocrite critics.

Verse 80 is among the juz's pivotal theological statements: "Ask forgiveness for them, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], or do not ask forgiveness for them. If you should ask forgiveness for them seventy times – never will Allah forgive them. That is because they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people." Classical exegetes connect this verse to the death of the Medinan hypocrite leader 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul, understood as marking the definitive limit of the Prophet's capacity for intercessory prayer on behalf of one who died in open hypocrisy, regardless of the sincerity or repetition of the effort.

Verse 84 extends this prohibition explicitly to the funeral rite: "And do not pray [the funeral prayer, O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], over any of them who has died – ever – or stand at his grave. Indeed, they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger and died while they were defiantly disobedient." Sahih al-Bukhari preserves a hadith describing the Prophet's initial willingness to perform the funeral prayer over 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy despite his known hypocrisy, and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab's vocal objection to this act, citing God's prior knowledge of the man's disbelief; the tradition connects the revelation of this verse to that episode, understood thereafter as settling the matter with a definitive prohibition. Verses 81–89 continue to press the theme of those Medinans who sought exemption from the Tabuk expedition, "rejoicing in their staying behind," while emphasizing that their preference for ease over exertion reflects a deeper spiritual deficiency rather than a mere logistical choice.

Q 9:90–92: the genuine excuse-makers and the weepers

The juz' closes with a passage that shifts in tone from denunciation to a more compassionate treatment of those with legitimate excuses. Verse 90 distinguishes excuse-making Bedouin (al-a'rab al-mu'tadhirun) who sought exemption from Tabuk from among the disbelieving and hypocritical Bedouin criticized more severely elsewhere in the surah, noting that a painful punishment will befall those among the latter who disbelieved.

Verses 91–92 then articulate one of the juz's most humane passages: "There is no blame upon the weak or upon the ill or upon those who do not find anything to spend, if they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger. There is no

cause [for blame] against the doers of good. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. Nor [is there blame] upon those who, when they came to you that you might give them mounts, and you said, 'I can find nothing for you to be transported on,' turned back while their eyes overflowed with tears out of grief that they could not find something to spend [for the cause]." This closing image of the bukka'un, the "weepers"—individuals who wished sincerely to join the Tabuk expedition but who could find no mount and were turned away by the Prophet for lack of means—is treated by commentators as a deliberately tender counterpoint to the preceding sections' harsh treatment of insincere excuse-makers, establishing that sincerity of intention, not mere logistical capacity, is the operative criterion of religious merit. The narrative of Tabuk's aftermath continues directly out of this material, including the well-known account, just beyond this juz' at 9:118 and corroborated by hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim and the sira literature, of Ka'b ibn Malik and two other Companions who stayed behind without valid excuse and endured a fifty-day social boycott before their repentance was accepted.

Synthesis

Across its span from the close of al-Anfal to the ninetieth-odd verse of at-Tawbah, this juz' traces the consolidation of the Medinan community's legal, military, and religious self-understanding in the period following the conquest of Mecca. Legally, it supplies foundational texts for the division of spoils (8:41), the treatment of prisoners of war, the termination and honoring of treaties (9:1–6), the jizyah governing relations with the People of the Book (9:29), and the eight-category structure of zakat distribution (9:60)—texts that would occupy centuries of subsequent juristic elaboration. Narratively and historically, it is anchored in three specific episodes: the Badr aftermath, the near-disaster and recovery at Hunayn, and above all the extended trial of communal loyalty during the Tabuk expedition, which occasions the juz's most sustained engagement with the phenomenon of hypocrisy (nifaq) as a socio-religious category distinct from both belief and open disbelief. Theologically, the juz' repeatedly returns to the theme that sincerity of intention and proportion of exertion—rather than wealth, lineage, or mere ritual custodianship—constitute the true measure of religious standing, a

theme that runs from the critique of Quraysh pride in mosque-keeping (9:17–19) through to the closing image of the weeping would-be volunteers turned away for want of a mount (9:92). Finally, the juz' contains some of the Qur'an's most historically and legally consequential, and consequently most contested, material in later interpretation—particularly 9:5 and 9:29—material that both the classical exegetical tradition and modern historical-critical scholarship converge, from different methodological starting points, in urging be read within its specific diplomatic and circumstantial setting rather than extracted as a timeless, unconditional directive.

Juz’ 11: Surah at-Tawbah 9:93 — Surah Hud 11:5

Surah at-Tawbah 9:93 through Surah Hud 11:5

This juz' – the eleventh of the thirty parts of the Qur'an – straddles a major literary and historical seam: it opens with the closing third of Surah at-Tawbah (9:93–129), a Medinan text preoccupied with the immediate aftermath of the Tabuk expedition of 9 AH and the internal discipline of the Muslim community, and then, without transition, moves into Surah Yunus (10), a complete Meccan surah devoted to argumentative theology and prophetic narrative, before concluding with the first five verses of Surah Hud (11), themselves a programmatic preface to that surah's extended cycle of destruction narratives. Scholars working in the chronological-literary tradition, such as Angelika Neuwirth, have long noted that the mushaf's canonical arrangement does not track the order of revelation, and this juz' is a particularly vivid illustration of that discontinuity: a text addressing hypocrisy, military mobilization, and communal repentance in Medina gives way abruptly to a text addressing Meccan polytheists' scorn for a human messenger and their doubts about resurrection. The juz' thus offers the reader two quite different registers of Qur'anic discourse in close sequence: the legislative and pastoral concerns of a functioning polity, and the homiletic, sign-laden rhetoric of prophetic warning.

At-Tawbah 9:93–99: Hypocrisy, excuse-making, and sincere Bedouin faith

The section immediately preceding this juz' (9:91–92) had established the category of the "excused" — the weak, the sick, and those lacking means to equip themselves for the Tabuk campaign, who incur no blame for staying behind. The verses opening this juz' turn to those without such genuine excuse, describing how "there is only a way [for blame] against those who ask permission of you while they are rich," whose hearts God has "sealed... so they do not know" (9:93). The passage distinguishes several tiers among those who failed to march: the confirmed hypocrites (munafiqun) who make false pretexts despite ample means; the Bedouin Arabs (al-a'rab) of the surrounding desert, described (9:97) as "more intense in disbelief and hypocrisy" owing to their remoteness from the Prophet's teaching and their

harsher social conditions; and, by contrast, a minority among the Bedouin who are sincere believers, described in 9:99 as those who "take what they spend [in the cause of Allah] as means of nearness to Allah and of [obtaining] invocations of the Messenger." The passage is thus not a blanket condemnation of the Bedouin as a class but a careful stratification — a feature classical commentators read as consistent with the surah's broader project of sorting the Medinan community into degrees of sincerity following the unusually demanding Tabuk mobilization.

At-Tawbah 9:100: The precedence of the Muhajirun and Ansar

"And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansar and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment." (9:100, Saheeh International)

This verse is treated by Ibn Kathir as establishing the superior rank of the earliest converts — the Meccan emigrants (Muhajirun) and the Medinan hosts (Ansar) — together with those later believers who follow them "in good conduct" (bi-ihsan). Ibn Kathir cites this verse, alongside various hadith on the virtues of the Companions, as grounds for the classical Sunni caution against reviling the earliest generation of Muslims. The verse functions structurally as a counterweight to the preceding condemnation of hypocrites: having catalogued failure and insincerity, the text now names an exemplary vanguard whose mutual "pleasure" (rida) with God is offered as the paradigm of faithful commitment. The asbab al-nuzul literature does not tie this verse to one discrete incident but rather situates it in the general context of praising participants in the hijrah and the early Medinan battles.

At-Tawbah 9:101–106: Degrees of hypocrisy and the purifying function of charity

The subsequent verses widen the lens to "some among the Bedouins around you [who] are hypocrites, and [some] among the people of Madinah [who] have persisted in hypocrisy" (9:101), noting pointedly that the Prophet himself does not know the identity of all of them — "you do not know them, [but] We know them." This is followed by 9:102, addressing a distinct

category: sinners "who have mixed a righteous deed with another that was bad," for whom God's acceptance of repentance is affirmed. Verse 9:103 then issues the well-known instruction:

"Take, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them."

This verse is foundational in Islamic legal and spiritual literature for the theology of zakat as a purifying transaction rather than a mere fiscal levy, and for the practice of supplicating for almsgivers. Verses 9:104–106 continue the theme of God's acceptance of repentance and His knowledge of hearts, closing with a further category of "others deferred until the command of Allah" (9:106) — those whose fate remains suspended pending divine judgment, a phrase commentators connect to the situation of some who stayed behind from Tabuk without the aggravated culpability of confirmed hypocrites.

At-Tawbah 9:107–110: The "Mosque of Harm"

"And [there are] those who took for themselves a mosque for causing harm and disbelief and division among the believers and as a station for whoever had warred against Allah and His Messenger before. And they will surely swear, 'We intended only the best.' And Allah testifies that indeed they are liars." (9:107)

This passage recounts one of the more concrete episodes embedded in the surah: a group of hypocrites in the vicinity of Medina constructed a rival mosque — traditionally called Masjid al-Dirar ("the Mosque of Harm") — ostensibly for pious purposes but in reality intended to foster division and to serve as a staging point connected to earlier hostility against the Prophet. The seerah sources record that the Prophet, upon returning from Tabuk, ordered this structure demolished or burned, an episode reported with unusual specificity in the biographical and exegetical literature rather than left to later inference. The passage contrasts this false mosque with the genuine one built "on righteousness from the first day" (9:108) — understood by the exegetical tradition as a reference to the Quba mosque, associated

with the Prophet's arrival in Medina during the hijrah — concluding with an architectural metaphor in 9:109 contrasting a foundation laid "on the fear of Allah" with one built "on the edge of a bank about to collapse," which topples its builder into the Fire.

At-Tawbah 9:111–112: The covenant of sale

"Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment." (9:111)

This verse, cast in the language of commercial exchange, has become one of the Qur'an's most frequently cited texts on sacrifice and martyrdom in the path of God. Its rhetorical structure — believers "selling" their lives and wealth in return for Paradise — is reinforced by its explicit claim of continuity across scriptural traditions, invoking the Torah and the Gospel alongside the Qur'an as prior attestations of the same covenant. Exegetes attentive to the Qur'an's rhetorical and argumentative structure, such as az-Zamakhshari in al-Kashshaf, highlight the verse's persuasive force as part of the surah's broader effort to frame communal sacrifice as a rational transaction rather than mere exhortation. Verse 9:112 follows with a list of qualities characterizing "the believers" implicated in this transaction — the repentant, the worshippers, those who enjoin right and forbid wrong, and so on — functioning as a character sketch of the ideal community member.

At-Tawbah 9:113–114: The prohibition on praying for polytheists

"It is not for the Prophet and those who have believed to ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even if they were relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of Hellfire." (9:113)

"And Abraham's asking forgiveness for his father was only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became apparent to him that he was an enemy of Allah, he disassociated himself from him. Indeed, Abraham was compassionate and forbearing." (9:114)

These two verses carry a widely reported occasion of revelation. Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim connect them to the Prophet's grief over his uncle Abu Talib, who had sheltered and supported him throughout the Meccan period but died without formally embracing Islam; reports describe the Prophet's continued desire to pray for his uncle's forgiveness until it became unambiguous that Abu Talib had died in a state of disbelief. The verses generalize this episode into a legal-theological principle, using the Qur'anic account of Abraham's prayer for his own father as the governing precedent: Abraham's supplication, the text explains, arose from an earlier promise and was withdrawn once his father's enmity to God became evident. Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both treat this pairing at length, deriving the juristic rule that supplication for the forgiveness of a deceased non-Muslim becomes impermissible once their state of disbelief at death is confirmed, while treating any such prayer offered in ignorance or before that clarity as a distinguishable, lesser matter — the same distinction, they note, that structures the Abraham narrative itself (compare also Q60:4, where Abraham's disavowal of his father is cited as a model of loyalty to God over kinship, with the explicit exception of his conditional prayer).

At-Tawbah 9:115–116: Divine guidance and knowledge

Verse 9:115 clarifies a related theological concern — that God does not lead a people astray after having guided them "until He has made clear to them what they should avoid," addressing a potential objection to the preceding verses: if forgiveness for the dead father is now impermissible, was earlier supplication before that clarity itself blameworthy? The answer given is that God's guidance operates progressively and that culpability tracks disclosed knowledge, not retrospective judgment. Verse 9:116 reaffirms God's sovereignty over the heavens and the earth and His power over life and death, serving as a doctrinal anchor between the Abu Talib/Abraham passage and the Tabuk-hardship verses that follow.

At-Tawbah 9:117–118: The hardship of Tabuk and the three who were left behind

"Allah has already forgiven the Prophet and the Muhajireen and the Ansar who followed him in the hour of difficulty..." (9:117, excerpt)

"And [He also forgave] the three who were left behind [and regretted their error] to the point that the earth closed in on them in spite of its vastness and their souls confined them and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them so they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful." (9:118)

Verse 9:117 refers to "the hour of difficulty" (sa'at al-'usrah), a phrase the classical tradition, notably al-Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan, connects specifically to the severe logistical and physical hardships of the Tabuk expedition — undertaken in extreme heat, at a season of scarce provisions, against the distant Byzantine frontier. Verse 9:118 then narrates, with unusual psychological interiority for the Qur'anic text, the ordeal of "the three who were left behind" (al-thalathah alladhina khullifu). This episode is documented in exceptional narrative detail in the long hadith of Ka'b ibn Malik preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, which recounts how Ka'b, together with Hilal ibn Umayyah and Murarah ibn al-Rabi', failed to join the Tabuk campaign without valid excuse, and were subsequently subjected to a fifty-day social boycott by the Prophet's command — the community was instructed to avoid speaking with them, and even their wives were separated from them — until the verses of their forgiveness were revealed. Al-Tabari's account, drawing on multiple chains reaching back to Ka'b's own family, remains among the most detailed early narrative reconstructions of this episode, and it stands as one of the more concrete and richly attested seerah correlations in the entire juz'.

At-Tawbah 9:119–122: Truthfulness and the obligation of religious learning

Verse 9:119 commands believers to "be with those who are true," reinforcing the surah's concern for sincerity following the preceding narrative of repentance. Verses 9:120–121 return to the theme of hardship in God's cause, affirming that no thirst, fatigue, or hunger suffered by believers "in the cause of Allah" goes unrewarded. Verse 9:122 then introduces a distinct and influential principle:

"And it is not for the believers to go forth [to battle] all at once. For there should separate from every division of them a group [remaining] to obtain

understanding in the religion and warn their people when they return to them that they might be cautious."

This verse qualifies the surah's preceding emphasis on universal mobilization for Tabuk by establishing that military participation need not be total; a portion of the community should instead devote itself to religious learning (tafaqquh fi'l-din) so as to instruct returning fighters and the wider community. This text has become a central proof-text in later Islamic legal theory for the concept of a communal obligation (fard kifayah) — a duty that, if fulfilled by a sufficient number, releases the remainder of the community from individual liability — here specifically applied to the pursuit of religious scholarship.

At-Tawbah 9:123–129: Closing exhortations and the Prophet's mercy

The surah's final section (9:123–126) instructs believers to "fight those adjacent to you of the disbelievers and let them find in you harshness," a verse generally read in its historical context of graduated military engagement beginning with proximate threats, and continues by describing the differential psychological effect of new Qur'anic revelation: increasing faith in believers, while adding "defilement to their defilement" among the hypocrites, who die in a state of disbelief (9:124–125). Verse 9:127 depicts the hypocrites glancing at one another and slipping away when a new surah is revealed, "then Allah has turned their hearts away," a rhetorical closing gesture consistent with the surah's sustained interest in the psychology of hypocrisy.

The surah then ends with its most widely cited concluding verses:

"There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful." (9:128)

"But if they turn away, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], say, 'Sufficient for me is Allah; there is no deity except Him. On Him I have relied, and He is the Lord of the Great Throne.'" (9:129)

Az-Zamakhshari draws attention to the rhetorical force of this closing pair, which shifts from the surah's sustained legal and political register to an

intimate characterization of the Prophet's emotional disposition toward his community — described as ra'uf rahim, "kind and merciful," terms elsewhere in the Qur'an reserved chiefly for divine attributes. Most commentators treat 9:128–129 as a general concluding address rather than tying it to a single incident, though some later reports discuss a scholarly debate over whether these verses were among the last portions of the Qur'an to be compiled in written form — a matter of textual-historical interest distinct from questions of the verses' original revelation, and one that later scholarship has treated with varying degrees of confidence.

Surah Yunus 10:1–20: A shift in register — Meccan apologetics

With the opening of Surah Yunus, the juz' moves into markedly different territory. Classified by the chronological-literary school (following Neuwirth and others) as late Meccan, the surah opens with an oath formula addressing Meccan disbelievers' incredulity that a human being, rather than an angel, should be chosen as bearer of revelation:

"Alif, Lam, Ra. These are the verses of the wise Book. Is it a wonder to the people that We revealed [revelation] to a man from among them, [saying], 'Warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe...'" (10:1–2, paraphrased)

This is a recurring objection in the Meccan corpus. Al-Qurtubi's al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an treats this opening passage, together with the surah's repeated rhetorical questions about the Qur'an's alleged human authorship, as central to the surah's apologetic purpose: to defend the legitimacy of prophetic revelation delivered through an ordinary human messenger. The following verses (10:3–10) elaborate God's creation and governance of the heavens and earth in six days, His establishment upon the Throne, and His "arranging of the matter," moving from creation to eschatology and back to an emphasis on human accountability, closing this opening unit with a description of the righteous "guided by their Lord because of their belief" amid "gardens of pleasure" (10:9).

Surah Yunus 10:21–70: Signs, parables, and the illegitimacy of arbitrary prohibition

This extended middle section of the surah develops its argument through cosmic and agricultural imagery rather than narrative. Representative is the parable of worldly life in 10:24:

"The example of [this] worldly life is but like rain which We have sent down from the sky that the plants of the earth absorb... then it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds. And Allah is ever, over all things, Perfectly Able."

Here the fragility and transience of worldly flourishing — vividly compared to lush vegetation that dries and scatters — is used to underscore the folly of investing ultimate value in temporal life. The section proceeds through repeated denunciations of shirk (associating partners with God) and, notably, of the practice of arbitrarily forbidding or permitting things without divine sanction (echoing a theme more fully developed elsewhere in the Qur'an, e.g., regarding pre-Islamic Arabian customs of prohibition). Throughout, the surah repeatedly returns to nature as evidentiary "signs" (ayat) — alternation of night and day, the sea that carries ships, rainfall and its fruits — presented as rational grounds for accepting both divine unity and the reality of resurrection, the latter being a recurrent point of Meccan skepticism that the surah addresses argumentatively rather than through narrative alone. Interspersed within this section are also brief polemical exchanges over the Qur'an's authenticity (10:37–39), and a repeated challenge to produce a comparable surah, tying this Meccan material back thematically, if not chronologically, to the "inimitability" (i'jaz) arguments associated elsewhere with the Qur'an's Medinan material.

Surah Yunus 10:71–93: Noah, and Moses before Pharaoh

The surah's narrative center recounts first, briefly, the mission of Noah — his rejection by his people and his prayer for judgment between himself and them — before turning at greater length to the story of Moses and Aaron sent to Pharaoh "with Our signs." This includes the confrontation with Pharaoh's sorcerers, whose staffs and ropes are outmatched by the sign given to Moses, and the eventual crossing of the sea and Pharaoh's pursuit and drowning. The account culminates in one of the more striking passages of the surah:

"...until, when drowning overtook him, he said, 'I believe that there is no deity except that in whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of the Muslims.' Now? And you had disobeyed [Him] before and were of the corrupters? So today We will save you in body that you may be to those who succeed you a sign. And indeed, many among the people, of Our signs, are heedless." (10:90–92)

Pharaoh's last-moment profession of faith is rejected as too late — a recurrent Qur'anic motif that repentance at the moment of witnessing one's own destruction has no salvific efficacy — while his body is said to be preserved as a didactic "sign" for later generations. Ibn Kathir's discussion of this passage centers on the theological problem of deathbed conversion under coercive certainty, rather than on the historicity of the bodily preservation as such. It may be noted, purely as a point of modern reception rather than classical exegesis, that some contemporary apologetic literature has connected this verse to the discovery of preserved royal mummies in Egypt in the late nineteenth century; such arguments lie outside the scope of, and are not addressed by, the classical tafsir tradition, and are noted here descriptively rather than endorsed.

Surah Yunus 10:94–98: Reassurance and the singular case of the people of Yunus

Toward the surah's close, the Prophet is reassured against any residual uncertainty (10:94, addressed conditionally — "if you are in doubt..."), reinforcing confidence in the continuity of revelation with prior scriptural communities. This leads to the surah's namesake passage:

"Then has there been a city that believed so its faith benefited it except the people of Jonah? When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in worldly life and gave them enjoyment for a time." (10:98)

This verse is treated at length by al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir as marking a theological exception within the Qur'an's broader pattern of destruction narratives: whereas other communities addressed in the Qur'an (and, at length, in the following Surah Hud) are destroyed once the punishment becomes imminent and manifest, the people of Jonah (Yunus)

are distinguished as the one community whose repentance, offered even after witnessing the visible onset of punishment, was accepted and the punishment lifted. The commentators discuss at length why this case differs from Pharaoh's rejected deathbed profession, generally locating the distinction in the fact that the people of Yunus repented as a collective, prior to the punishment's full execution, rather than at the point of no return.

Surah Yunus 10:99–109: Closing exhortations

The surah closes with reflections on the limits of the Prophet's responsibility — he cannot compel belief, since "had your Lord willed, those on earth would have believed, all of them entirely" (10:99) — and reiterates that no soul believes except by God's permission. A widely cited verse earlier in this closing movement describes the Qur'an's therapeutic function:

"O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers." (10:57)

This verse exemplifies the argumentative-cum-pastoral register that dominates the surah's closing chapters, which end with a final instruction to the Prophet to follow what is revealed to him and to "be patient until Allah judges" (10:109) — a closing note of steadfastness that anticipates the sterner tone of the surah that follows.

Surah Hud 11:1–5: Programmatic opening

The juz' closes with the first five verses of Surah Hud, which Ibn 'Ashur's al-Tahrir wa't-Tanwir treats as programmatic for the surah's entire subsequent structure:

"Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Acquainted, [saying], 'Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a warner and a bringer of good tidings.'" (11:1–2)

Ibn 'Ashur emphasizes the literary coherence (nazm) of this opening, describing the Qur'an as "perfected" (uhkimat) in its overall composition and then "explained in detail" (fussilat) — a self-description that anticipates the surah's coming procedure of elaborating, through an extended sequence of

prophetic case-studies (Noah, Hud, Salih, Abraham, Lot, Shu'ayb — the bulk of which falls in the following juz'), the single underlying message just stated in summary form: exclusive worship of God, delivered through a human warner. Verses 11:3–4 continue with a call to seek God's forgiveness and turn to Him in repentance, promising provision and reward, and reminding that "to Allah is your return, and He is over all things competent" (11:4). The juz' ends on verse 11:5:

"Unquestionably, they the disbelievers turn away their breasts to hide themselves from Him. Unquestionably, [even] when they cover themselves in their clothing, Allah knows what they conceal and what they declare. Indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts."

Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, following a report attributed to Ibn 'Abbas, read this verse as referring to Meccan polytheists' physical and psychological attempts to avoid the Prophet's message — turning away, covering themselves, or averting their faces so as not to hear or be seen listening to the Qur'an — met with the declaration that such concealment is futile before a God who knows "what is within the breasts." This closing image of futile concealment functions as a fitting threshold to the extended narratives of prophetic rejection and destruction that structure the remainder of Surah Hud, of which the tradition also records a hadith, transmitted in Sunan al-Tirmidhi but graded weak or of uncertain chain by a number of scholars, in which the Prophet is reported to have said that "Hud and its sisters have made me grow old" — an observation that, if authentic, would plausibly reflect the surah's unusually severe tone regarding the fate of nations that rejected their prophets, though the hadith's weak chain warrants caution in treating it as established historical fact.

Taken as a whole, this juz' juxtaposes two structurally distinct modes of Qur'anic discourse. The Medinan close of at-Tawbah is preoccupied with the internal governance of a young political community: sorting sincerity from hypocrisy, regulating charity and repentance, commemorating the hardship of Tabuk and the vindication of the "three who were left behind," and closing on an image of prophetic tenderness toward the believers. The Meccan material of Yunus and the opening of Hud, by contrast, is argumentative and cosmological, marshaling nature's signs, prior prophetic history, and the

specific fates of Noah's contemporaries, Pharaoh, and the people of Jonah to press the case for divine unity, the legitimacy of a human messenger, and the reality of resurrection — culminating in Hud's declaration that the Qur'an's message, however elaborated through detailed narrative, reduces to a single summons: to worship God alone, from whom nothing hidden in the human breast can ultimately be concealed.

Juz’ 12: Surah Hud 11:6 — Surah Yusuf 12:52

Surah Hud 11:6 through Surah Yusuf 12:52

This juz' spans the middle portion of Sūrat Hūd (11:6–123) and the opening half of Sūrat Yūsuf (12:1–52). Thematically, it belongs to a distinctive stratum of Meccan revelation dominated by extended prophetic narrative: Hūd continues and closes with a sequence of "punishment narratives" (Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Abraham and Lot, Shuʿayb, and a summary reference to Moses), each following a shared template of warning, elite rejection, and destruction, before pivoting into direct exhortation to the Prophet Muḥammad and his community to remain steadfast. Sūrat Yūsuf then departs from this fragmentary pattern to offer the Qur'an's only sustained, single-thread narrative — the story of Joseph — carried in this juz' from his childhood dream through his enslavement, the seduction episode, and his imprisonment. The juz' as a whole is thus concerned with theodicy, the psychology of trial, and the consolatory function of sacred history.

Divine providence and the register of creation (Hūd 11:6)

The juz' opens mid-surah with a declaration of comprehensive providence: "And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register." This verse functions as a hinge, closing the surah's opening theological statements on tawḥīd and revelation and preparing the ground for the historical narratives that follow. Exegetes read it as establishing the interpretive key for the destruction narratives to come: the fates of Noah's people, ʿĀd, Thamūd, and the others are not arbitrary catastrophes but occur within a providential order in which every creature's sustenance and end is already inscribed. Al-Ṭabarī's Jāmiʿ al-Bayān situates the succeeding prophetic stories within precisely this providential frame, reading the surah's recurring narrative pattern — warning, rejection by the notables, destruction — as a rhetorical strategy of consolation (tasliyah) directed at Muḥammad during Meccan persecution: if God's knowledge and register encompass every creature, then the suffering of His messengers and their followers likewise falls within a comprehended and purposeful design.

The story of Noah (Hūd 11:25–49)

The first and longest of the punishment narratives concerns Nūḥ (Noah). Verses such as 11:25–27 depict Noah's preaching to his people and their dismissive response — "We do not see you but as a man like ourselves" — establishing a pattern of elite incredulity toward a merely human messenger that recurs with each subsequent prophet in the surah. The narrative proceeds through God's command to build the ark (11:36–39), the boarding of pairs of every kind along with the believers, and the onset of the flood, rendered in the Qur'an's famously concise rhetorical climax at 11:44: "O earth, swallow your water, and O sky, withhold [your rain]. And the water subsided, and the matter was accomplished." Classical rhetoricians and commentators, az-Zamakhsharī prominent among them, have long admired this verse's economy — an entire cosmic reversal compressed into a few imperative clauses. The narrative's emotional core lies in 11:42–47, the drowning of Noah's own son, who refuses his father's call to board the ark and is swept away; Noah's plea to God on his son's behalf and the divine response — that the son was not "of your family" in the sense that matters, since his deed was other than righteous — introduces a theme that will recur throughout the juz': that kinship and biological descent do not by themselves secure divine favor or protection, a point of continuing theological reflection in the commentary tradition regarding the limits of intercession and family loyalty against righteousness.

Hūd and ʿĀd; Ṣāliḥ and Thamūd (Hūd 11:50–68)

The narrative pattern repeats with the prophet Hūd, sent to the people of ʿĀd, who are described as materially prosperous and physically imposing yet arrogant in their rejection of monotheism; their destruction follows their persistence in unbelief despite manifest material blessing, a detail commentators note as underscoring that prosperity is not itself evidence of divine approval. The narrative then turns to Ṣāliḥ and the Thamūd, centered on the sign of the she-camel (al-nāqah) — a miraculous provision that the people are commanded to let graze freely and not harm. Their hamstringing of the camel constitutes the decisive act of defiance, met with a three-day respite and then destruction by a mighty blast (al-ṣayḥah). Both narratives conform to a structural template that modern scholarship on the Qur'an's Meccan surahs — building on earlier form-critical comparisons between

Qur'anic and biblical "punishment legend" material — has identified across this sequence: warning by a messenger drawn from within the community, rejection concentrated among the wealthy and powerful, a specific transgression against a divinely granted sign, and a stereotyped mode of destruction. Such repetition, scholars in this vein argue, functioned catechetically for the early Meccan community, reinforcing communal identity through typological memory in a manner loosely comparable to biblical and other ancient Near Eastern destruction narratives, while remaining formally and theologically distinct in its Qur'anic idiom.

Abraham's guests and the story of Lot (Hūd 11:69–83)

The narrative shifts register with the account of Ibrāhīm's angelic visitors, who bring news of Isaac's birth and then proceed toward the cities of Lot's people. The episode of Lūṭ (Lot) that follows — the angels' reception in Lot's household, the hostility of his people, his wife's implication in their fate, and the overturning of the cities (traditionally identified with Sodom and Gomorrah) — reiterates the surah's punishment template while introducing the specific charge against Lot's people of transgressive sexual practice. As with Noah's son, the fate of Lot's wife again illustrates the theme that proximity to a prophet by marriage does not itself confer exemption from judgment, reinforcing a motif threading through the surah regarding the primacy of righteous conduct over kinship.

Shuʿayb and Madyan (Hūd 11:84–95)

The prophet Shuʿayb is sent to the people of Madyan, whose central offense is commercial: the shortchanging of measures and scales in trade, coupled with broader social corruption. This narrative is notable among the sequence for grounding its critique in concrete economic ethics rather than solely ritual or sexual transgression, and it too culminates in the community's destruction after rejecting Shuʿayb's appeal. Commentators note the surah's deliberate variety in the nature of each community's specific sin — arrogance and physical pride (ʿĀd), violation of a sacred sign (Thamūd), sexual transgression (Lot's people), and commercial fraud (Madyan) — while the underlying structural pattern of warning and rejection remains constant,

illustrating what al-Ṭabarī and later exegetes treat as a comprehensive survey of the varieties of communal wrongdoing.

Moses and Pharaoh; the Day of Judgment (Hūd 11:96–108)

The sequence of narratives concludes with a brief, summary reference to Mūsā (Moses) and Pharaoh, presented not as an extended narrative but as a further, compressed instance of the same recurring prophetic pattern, its brevity here contrasting with its much fuller treatment elsewhere in the Qur'an. This transitions into a homiletic passage on the Day of Judgment (11:105–108), describing the contrasting fates of the wretched and the blessed, which functions to universalize the preceding historical narratives: the pattern of warning and consequence that governed ʿĀd, Thamūd, and the rest is presented as continuous with the ultimate eschatological reckoning awaiting all humanity.

Reliance on God: Hūd's declaration (Hūd 11:56)

Amid the narrative of Hūd and ʿĀd stands one of the surah's most quoted theological statements: "Indeed, I have relied upon Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature but that He holds it by its forelock. Indeed, my Lord is on a straight path." The image of God holding every creature "by its forelock" (nāṣiyatihā) is a vivid Arabic idiom of total mastery and control, here invoked by Hūd precisely in the face of his people's threats against him. The verse has become a touchstone in later discussions of tawakkul (reliance upon God), cited as expressing the psychological posture appropriate to a believer confronted with hostile power: total confidence grounded not in personal strength but in the conviction that all agency, however apparently free, remains within divine grasp. The closing clause — that God is "upon a straight path" — extends the claim from mere power to moral rectitude, asserting that this comprehensive control is exercised justly.

Steadfastness and the aging of the Prophet (Hūd 11:112)

Among the most theologically and biographically resonant verses in the juz' is 11:112: "So remain on a right course as you have been commanded, [you] and those who have turned back with you [to Allah], and do not transgress. Indeed, He is Seeing of what you do." Ibn Kathīr, in Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm,

records the widely repeated tradition — transmitted via al-Tirmidhī, though its chain is discussed as weak by some hadith critics (al-Tirmidhī himself notes it as gharīb) — in which the Prophet, asked about his premature grey hair, is said to have replied, "Sūrah Hūd and its sisters have made me grow old" (shayyabatnī Hūd wa akhawātuhā). The demand contained in this single verse — istiqāmah, unwavering steadfastness "as you have been commanded," without addition or deviation — is read by commentators as uniquely exacting among Qur'anic injunctions, precisely because it requires sustained moral and spiritual constancy rather than a single discrete act of obedience. Whether or not the specific narration is fully authenticated, its persistent citation across the tafsīr tradition reflects a broad exegetical consensus that this verse represents an unusually heavy burden of prophetic responsibility.

The expiatory power of good deeds (Hūd 11:114)

Immediately following is one of the juz's more practically consequential verses: "And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember." This verse carries a firmly documented occasion of revelation (sabab al-nuzūl), recorded in both Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim via ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd: a man came to the Prophet in evident distress, having kissed (in some narrations, embraced) a woman not his wife, and confessed the act. The Prophet did not respond until this verse was revealed; he then recited it to the man, who asked whether the ruling applied to him specifically, to which the Prophet replied, "for all of my nation, all of them" (li-jamīʿi ummatī kulluhum). This episode makes 11:114 among the most securely attested cases of sabab al-nuzūl in the entire juz', and it establishes a foundational principle in Islamic ethical and legal thought regarding the expiatory function of righteous deeds — prayer prominent among them — in relation to lesser transgressions, distinguishing this class of sin from graver offenses requiring formal legal sanction.

Human diversity and divine mercy (Hūd 11:117–119)

The closing theological reflections of the surah address the justice of divine dealings with communities and the reality of human disagreement: God does

not destroy communities unjustly while they act righteously, and "if your Lord had willed, He could have made mankind one community; but they will not cease to differ, except whom your Lord has given mercy, and for that He created them." This passage occupies a significant place in the history of Islamic theological debate (kalām) over free will, predestination, and the purpose of human diversity, and it has likewise drawn sustained attention in academic studies of Qur'anic theodicy. The verse holds together, without full resolution, the ideas that God could have imposed uniformity but did not, that difference and disagreement are a persistent feature of human existence, and that mercy — itself apparently divinely granted rather than merely self-generated — exempts some from the consequences of this discord. Exegetes across the tradition have offered varying accounts of the relationship between "for that He created them" and the preceding clauses, debating whether the referent is diversity itself, mercy, or the broader trial of human moral agency, without arriving at full consensus — a genuine interpretive crux rather than a settled matter.

Closing exhortation and the purpose of narrative (Hūd 11:109–123)

The surah closes by turning explicitly toward the Prophet and his community, urging patience and constancy, and offering in 11:120 the Qur'an's own account of why these prophetic narratives have been related at such length: "And each [story] We relate to you of the news of the messengers is that by which We make firm your heart." This verse functions as an explicit hermeneutical key for the entire preceding sequence, confirming al-Ṭabarī's reading of the punishment narratives as instruments of tasliyah — consolation and heart-strengthening — rather than merely historical record. The surah concludes at 11:123 with a statement of divine sovereignty over the unseen and the ultimate return of all affairs to God, closing the theological circle opened at 11:6.

Sūrat Yūsuf: the best of narratives (Yūsuf 12:1–3)

The juz' then turns to Sūrat Yūsuf, traditionally dated, per the sīrah sources (Ibn Isḥāq/Ibn Hishām), to the so-called "Year of Sorrow" (ʿām al-ḥuzn) — the period following the deaths of Khadījah bint Khuwaylid and Abū Ṭālib, which intensified Meccan persecution of the Prophet. Ibn ʿĀshūr's al-Taḥrīr wa'l-

Tanwīr situates the surah's revelation within this context, reading the eventual vindication of Joseph after prolonged suffering as a source of consolation for the Prophet during documented hardship; this remains, however, an interpretive inference drawn from context rather than a hadith-attested sabab al-nuzūl tied to specific verses of the surah. Some tafsīr compilations additionally associate the surah's origin with a query put to the Prophet — by interlocutors familiar with the Torah's account of Joseph — asking him to relate the story, though this tradition, loosely attributed in places to Ibn ʿAbbās transmissions, is treated with caution by hadith critics given its uncertain chain of transmission.

The surah opens by designating its content "the best of stories" (aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ, 12:3): "We relate to you, [O Muḥammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Qur'an although you were, before it, among the unaware." Exegetes have long discussed the sense in which the Joseph narrative merits this designation, generally converging on its unique compositional unity: unlike the fragmented, thematically interspersed prophetic references typical of the Qur'an (including, notably, the very surah preceding it), Yūsuf is narrated as a single continuous story from beginning to end. This literary distinctiveness has drawn attention in modern scholarship on Qur'anic narrative technique — writers such as Mustansir Mir have discussed Yūsuf as an exceptional case of sustained linear storytelling within a text that elsewhere favors non-linear, allusive treatment of shared narrative material, while Marianna Klar's work on the surah's literary structure situates it within broader comparative study of the Qur'an's relationship to the Genesis account (Genesis 37–50).

The dream and the brothers' plot (Yūsuf 12:4–20)

The narrative's inciting incident is Joseph's dream, recounted to his father: "O my father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me" (12:4). Commentators have offered sustained symbolic and typological readings of this image, with the eleven stars generally understood as Joseph's brothers and the sun and moon as his parents — an interpretation that anticipates the narrative's eventual resolution when this dream is fulfilled. Jacob's immediate response is to warn Joseph against relating the dream to his brothers, foreseeing their envy, and

this foresight proves justified: the brothers conspire against Joseph out of jealousy, ultimately casting him into a well and deceiving their father with a fabricated account of his death by a wolf. The brothers bring their father a shirt marked with false blood (12:18): "And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, 'Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe.'" This moment introduces the recurring motif of ṣabr jamīl — "beautiful patience" — a mode of endurance characterized not by passive resignation but by dignified restraint that neither despairs of God nor voices complaint against Him, a motif that recurs at structurally significant points throughout the remainder of the narrative. Joseph is subsequently sold into slavery and taken to Egypt.

The seduction narrative and prophetic protection (Yūsuf 12:21–29)

In Egypt, Joseph enters the household of al-ʿAzīz, and the narrative turns to one of the surah's most theologically and ethically significant episodes: the attempted seduction by his master's wife. "And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him... He said, 'I seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, he is my master, who has made good my residence...' And she certainly determined [to seduce] him, and he would have inclined to her had he not seen the proof of his Lord" (12:23–24). This passage has occasioned extensive classical debate over the meaning of "the proof of his Lord" (burhān rabbihi) — Ibn Kathīr and al-Qurṭubī, among others, canvass a range of interpretations extending from a vision or supernatural sign granted to Joseph in the moment, to an internal rational or moral restraint that checked his inclination, without arriving at a settled consensus on the precise literal referent. The passage is closely bound up with the doctrine of ʿiṣmah — prophetic protection from grave sin — and comparative scholarship has noted that the Qur'anic narrative's insistence on Joseph's moral innocence in this episode, together with its extended treatment of the accusation and its social and legal aftermath, has no close parallel in the Genesis account, where the episode receives comparatively brief treatment.

The narrative's forensic dimension follows immediately: the tearing of Joseph's shirt from behind becomes decisive circumstantial evidence of his innocence, adjudicated by a witness within the household who reasons from

the direction of the tear (12:26–28). Al-Qurṭubī's al-Jāmiʿ liʾAḥkām al-Qurʾān draws on this episode for its juristic implications, treating the torn shirt as an instance of circumstantial evidence (qarīna) admissible in reasoning toward legal or factual conclusions — a passage subsequently cited in later Islamic legal theory (uṣūl al-fiqh) discussions of the evidentiary weight of indirect indicators alongside direct testimony.

The women of the city and imprisonment (Yūsuf 12:30–34)

The episode's social repercussions extend to the women of the city, who gossip about the affair and are subsequently invited by al-ʿAzīz's wife to a gathering at which, upon beholding Joseph, they are so overcome by his beauty that they cut their hands with the knives provided for fruit (12:31). Az-Zamakhsharī's al-Kashshāf is particularly noted for its rhetorical (balāghī) analysis of this scene and of the Qur'anic narrative's characteristic ellipses (ḥadhf) — significant narrative gaps left for the reader to infer — which he treats as a hallmark of the text's rhetorical inimitability (iʿjāz). Despite the public vindication this scene lends to Joseph's innocence, he is nonetheless imprisoned, an outcome the narrative presents as arising from social expediency rather than genuine belief in his guilt. In prison Joseph offers the prayer recorded at 12:33: "My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. And if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them and [thus] be of the ignorant." This verse is treated as a pivotal statement of prophetic reliance upon God as the ultimate safeguard against temptation, echoing in a personal register the broader theme of tawakkul already established in Hūd 11:56.

Prison, dream-interpretation, and the beginning of vindication (Yūsuf 12:35–52)

The final movement of this juz' finds Joseph in prison alongside two fellow inmates, whose dreams he interprets — one destined for restoration to the king's service, the other for execution. Before offering these interpretations, Joseph uses the occasion to call his companions to the worship of the one God, contrasting the multiplicity of "lords" they serve with the singular sovereignty of Allah (12:39) — a brief but pointed passage in which the surah's narrative momentum pauses for direct theological address,

reminding the reader that the story of Joseph is not merely dramatic but purposefully didactic. Joseph asks the man who will be freed to mention him to the king, but the man forgets, prolonging Joseph's imprisonment; the Qur'an notes this lapse explicitly (12:42), a detail commentators read as underscoring the futility of relying on human intermediaries rather than on God alone. The narrative then introduces the king's own dream of seven fat cows devoured by seven lean ones and seven green ears of grain alongside seven withered ones, occurring near the close of this juz's range, which Joseph is eventually asked to interpret, setting in motion the process of his release and rise to authority. The juz' formally ends at 12:52, on the threshold of the wife of al-ʿAzīz's public confession — "Now the truth has become evident. It was I who sought to seduce him" — which properly belongs to the following juz' but stands as the narrative's approaching resolution: the vindication, after prolonged trial, of Joseph's integrity.

Synthesis

Read together, the latter portion of Hūd and the opening of Yūsuf present two complementary literary strategies serving a single theological end. Hūd's sequence of punishment narratives — Noah, ʿĀd, Thamūd, Lot's people, Madyan, and Moses — operates through repetition and variation, establishing a comprehensive typology of communal rejection and consequence while explicitly declaring, in 11:120, that its purpose is to fortify the Prophet's heart. Yūsuf, by contrast, achieves a comparable consolatory effect through the opposite technique: a single, sustained, linear story of a righteous individual who endures betrayal, false accusation, and imprisonment while maintaining ṣabr jamīl and reliance on God, moving steadily — though only partly within this juz' — toward eventual vindication. Both surahs share, despite their divergent forms, a preoccupation with the relationship between human suffering and divine justice, the limits of kinship as protection against wrongdoing or as an automatic register of merit, and the conviction, made explicit at several pivotal verses (11:6, 11:56, 11:118–119, 12:33), that all human affairs remain within a providential order that is at once comprehensive in scope and, the text insists, uncompromisingly just.

Juz’ 13: Surah Yusuf 12:53 — Surah Ibrahim 14:52

Surah Yusuf 12:53 through Surah Ibrahim 14:52

Juz' 13 opens partway through Surah Yusuf, at the hinge between the story's crisis and its resolution, and carries the reader through the whole of Surah Ar-Ra'd and the whole of Surah Ibrahim. Thematically, the juz' moves from a single, intricately plotted family narrative into two dense argumentative surahs built around "signs" (ayat) — natural, historical, and rhetorical — that press the case for tawhid, gratitude, and prophetic vindication. Read together, the three units trace a single arc: personal providence (Yusuf), cosmic and moral providence (Ar-Ra'd), and prophetic-historical providence (Ibrahim), the last surah closing with Abraham's own prayer for the sanctuary at Mecca, linking the juz's opening Egyptian setting to the Arabian one in which the Qur'an was itself being revealed.

The conclusion of the Yusuf narrative (Q12:53–101)

The juz' begins mid-scene: Yusuf has just been vindicated of the accusation brought against him in the house of the 'Aziz, and the surah pauses on a striking confessional statement before resuming the plot. Q12:53 reads, "And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful." The verse is grammatically ambiguous as to its speaker, and classical exegesis reflects genuine disagreement on this point rather than a settled consensus. Al-Tabari catalogues multiple early authorities, including reports traced to Ibn 'Abbas and Mujahid, on whether "the soul" (al-nafs) here refers to the wife of the 'Aziz continuing her confession of guilt, or to Yusuf himself offering a general reflection on human nature despite his innocence in this particular episode; al-Tabari treats the ambiguity as inherent to the text rather than resolvable with certainty from wording alone. Ibn Kathir surveys the same options and inclines toward reading the verse as part of the woman's continued speech, a position al-Qurtubi also favors on largely grammatical grounds — the continuity of first-person address from the preceding verses. Either way, the verse functions as one of the Qur'an's key anthropological statements: the nafs (soul/self) is characterized as ammara bi'l-su' — habitually inclined to evil — except where divine mercy

intervenes, a formula later exegetes and Sufi writers would elaborate into a fuller psychology of the self (alongside the "self-reproaching soul," al-nafs al-lawwama, and "the soul at peace," al-nafs al-mutma'inna, found elsewhere in the Qur'an).

The narrative then resumes in earnest with Q12:58–93, best treated as a connected block rather than verse by verse, given its dramatic rather than doctrinal density. Yusuf's brothers arrive in Egypt during the famine seeking grain and encounter their brother now empowered as a high state official, though they fail to recognize him. Yusuf recognizes them immediately and orchestrates a series of tests: he insists on their bringing their youngest brother Binyamin (Benjamin) on a return trip, secretly returns their payment in their provisions, and finally engineers the retention of Binyamin in Egypt by having a drinking-cup planted in his saddlebag and "discovered" as evidence of theft, invoking the legal custom (as the brothers themselves state it) that the presumed thief be kept as a bondsman. The passage is notable for its sustained dramatic irony — Yusuf's private knowledge and the brothers' ignorance structure nearly the entire episode — and comparative literary scholarship (echoed in the work of scholars such as Marianna Klar on qasas structure) has drawn attention to the surah's patterned use of concealment and revelation across its three settings: the well, the prison, and the palace, each a site where Yusuf is first hidden and then elevated. Traditional exegetes such as Ibn Kathir treat this same material as continuous sacred history with moral exemplarity at its center — patience, trust in God, and the eventual unmasking of truth — while modern literary-critical readings analyze the same techniques as compositional artistry; the difference, as several scholars note, reflects differing disciplinary aims rather than a contradiction over the narrative's content.

The passage climaxes at Q12:90, the recognition scene: "They said, 'Are you indeed Joseph?' He said, 'I am Joseph, and this is my brother. Allah has certainly favored us. Indeed, he who fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.'" The moment resolves decades of separation and functions as the narrative's moral thesis-statement: taqwa (God-consciousness) and sabr (patience) are vindicated by outcome, a formula that recurs throughout the surah's

structure. Just prior to this, Q12:87 gives the reader Ya'qub's (Jacob's) parallel counsel to his remaining sons as he sends them back to search for Yusuf and Binyamin: "O my sons, go and find out about Joseph and his brother and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people." This verse is frequently cited independently of its narrative context as a theology-of-hope proof-text, its logic being that despair (ya's) of divine relief (rawh) is treated as tantamount to kufr — a strong statement whose severity exegetes generally soften by noting that it describes settled, final despair of God's mercy rather than ordinary grief, which Ya'qub himself is depicted as experiencing throughout the surah (he is described elsewhere as having wept until his eyes turned white with sorrow).

Q12:94–101 then narrates the denouement: Ya'qub, from a distance, perceives "the scent of Joseph" even before the caravan bearing news arrives; Yusuf's shirt is brought and cast over his father's face, restoring his sight; the family travels to Egypt and is reunited; and Yusuf's parents and brothers prostrate before him, fulfilling the dream recounted at the surah's opening (12:4), where Yusuf as a boy saw eleven stars, the sun, and the moon prostrating to him. The narrative thus closes with a formal inclusio, its opening dream answered by its final scene, a structural feature classical exegetes note as confirming the surah's providential design — nothing in the story, on this reading, is incidental.

The epilogue and its meta-statement (Q12:102–111)

The surah's final section shifts register from narrative to direct address of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him. The Qur'an states that this account is among "the news of the unseen which We reveal to you [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him]; and you were not with them when they put together their plan while they conspired" (12:102, paraphrased sense), framing the whole preceding narrative as a form of confirming revelation — knowledge the Prophet could not have obtained by ordinary means, and thus itself a sign of his prophetic office. The section proceeds through a warning against shirk (associating partners with God, 12:106) and general reflection on the fate of past nations, before arriving at the surah's capstone statement, Q12:111: "There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those

of understanding. Never was the Qur'an a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things, and guidance and mercy for a believing people." Both al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir treat this verse as a hermeneutical key to the Qur'an's own conception of qasas (narrative): stories are related not as history for its own sake but as moral instruction ('ibra) for "those of understanding" (uli'l-albab) and as confirmation of previous revelation. Angelika Neuwirth's chronological-thematic reading develops this point further, situating the whole of Yusuf as a sustained meditation on providence rather than mere storytelling — consistent with the verse's own self-description — and locating the surah within the middle-to-late Meccan period, when extended narrative increasingly serves a consolatory function for the Prophet and his followers under conditions of social rejection. On this point, the sira tradition (via Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham) associates the surah's overall tone with the so-called "Year of Sorrow" ('am al-huzn), the period following the deaths of Khadijah and Abu Talib, though this association concerns the surah's broader revelatory context and consolatory function rather than any specific verse within this juz'; readers should treat it as background coloring rather than a precise occasion of revelation for 12:53–111 itself.

Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:1–43): signs, thunder, and human agency

Surah Ar-Ra'd ("The Thunder") opens with disconnected letters (alif-lam-mim-ra) and moves quickly into a dense cosmological argument. Given its tightly interwoven, cumulative style, this surah is best treated in block-summary form for most of its length, with closer attention paid to a handful of pivotal verses.

The opening section (13:2–4) surveys creation: God "raised the heavens without pillars that you [can] see," subjected the sun and moon, "each running [its course] for a specified term," spread out the earth, and placed therein firmly set mountains and rivers, and "of all fruits He made therein two mates," concluding repeatedly with variations on the refrain "indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought" (li-qawmin yatafakkarun). Al-Zamakhshari's rhetorically oriented reading treats this refrain as a deliberate argumentative device, building a cumulative case for tawhid through accumulated natural evidence rather than through doctrinal assertion; Ibn

Kathir's more report-based approach instead anchors the same verses in narrations elaborating on creation and divine knowledge. Fazlur Rahman's thematic account of the surah likewise emphasizes this "signs" theology as central to the Qur'an's rational-persuasive method: thunder, lightning, rain, and the diversity of plant life sharing a single soil and irrigated by the same water yet differing in taste and quality (13:4) are marshalled as arguments — not merely decorative imagery — for both divine unity and, by extension, resurrection.

The surah's namesake verses, 13:12–13, describe lightning as inspiring both fear and hope, and state that "the thunder exalts [Allah] with praise... and the angels [as well] from fear of Him." Popular devotional literature attaches specific prophetic supplications to be recited upon hearing thunder, but the research underlying this commentary found no hadith with strong, specific, and uncontested Prophetic attribution tied confidently to these verses; several circulating attributions are mawquf (traced only to a Companion, often Ibn 'Abbas, rather than to the Prophet) and should be treated cautiously rather than repeated as established Prophetic hadith.

The surah proceeds through a series of parables and polemical passages against those who reject resurrection and revelation. Q13:17 offers an extended simile: rain sent down fills riverbeds "according to their capacity," and the flood carries a rising froth; likewise, when metal is smelted for ornaments or tools, a froth like it appears. "Thus Allah presents [the example of] truth and falsehood. As for the foam, it vanishes, [being] cast off; but as for that which benefits the people, it remains on the earth." The image likens enduring truth to what is genuinely useful to humanity and transient falsehood to discardable froth — a compact argument for the eventual triumph of revealed truth over rejection and mockery.

Q13:11 contains one of the surah's most frequently cited fragments, often quoted independent of its immediate context: "...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves..." The verse is regularly invoked in later Islamic reformist and da'wa literature as a general principle of human agency and divine sunan (consistent patterns in how God deals with communities), though its immediate qur'anic context concerns divine protective agency more broadly (the preceding

clause describes angels who take turns guarding a person "by the command of Allah"). The verse thus operates on two registers simultaneously in the exegetical tradition: as a statement about the mechanics of divine decree, and, more popularly, as a maxim about the necessity of internal reform preceding external change.

Later in the surah, Q13:28 offers one of the Qur'an's central devotional statements: "Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured." Ibn Kathir situates the verse within the broader Meccan context of consoling believers under social and psychological pressure, and cites hadith literature on the merit of dhikr (remembrance) — a theme also elaborated in Sahih Muslim's Book of Remembrance (Kitab al-Dhikr), though the precise hadith most commonly paired with this specific verse varies among commentators and should be checked against the primary collections rather than assumed fixed. Al-Qurtubi, true to his characteristic method, expands from tafsir proper into fiqh, discussing forms of dhikr recommended by later jurists. The verse became, and remains, a foundational proof-text in Sufi and broader devotional literature on the psychological function of remembrance as a source of tranquility (itmi'nan).

Q13:38 addresses a recurring polemical theme: "And We did certainly send messengers before you and appointed for them wives and descendants. And it was not for a messenger to bring a sign except by permission of Allah. For every term is a decree." Several commentators link this verse to objections raised by opponents against the Prophet's marriages and ordinary family life, arguing via the precedent of earlier messengers that prophethood does not require celibacy or withdrawal from domestic life; the specific occasion is reported with variant and not fully harmonized chains, and later critical scholarship treats the connection cautiously rather than as an established asbab al-nuzul.

The surah closes (13:39–43) reaffirming that God "eliminates what He wills and confirms [what He wills], and with Him is the Mother of the Book" (13:39), that the Prophet's task is only to convey the message (balagh) while reckoning belongs to God, and that God's decisive testimony is sufficient

witness against the deniers — themes that reiterate, in compressed form, the surah's opening argument from creation.

Surah Ibrahim (14:1–52): darkness into light, gratitude, and Abraham's prayer

Surah Ibrahim opens by restating the Qur'an's basic purpose: "Alif, Lam, Ra. [This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], that you might bring mankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord — to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy" (14:1). The "darkness to light" formula recurs across the Qur'an as a summary description of the prophetic mission, and its placement at this surah's opening frames everything that follows — historical example, moral parable, and prayer — as elaboration of that single mission.

Q14:5–8 briefly recount Musa (Moses) being commanded to bring his people "out of darknesses into the light and remind them of the days of Allah," followed by Musa's warning to his people that gratitude secures increase while ingratitude invites severe punishment, and his declaration that God is free of need of creation regardless of their belief or disbelief. This leads into Q14:9, which broadens the historical frame: "Has there not reached you the news of those before you — the people of Noah and 'Ad and Thamud and those after them?" Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, reads this rhetorical question and the surah's recurring invocations of prior destroyed nations as a structured argument from history, contrasting the fates of earlier disbelieving peoples with Meccan intransigence — a deliberate rhetorical strategy rather than simple narrative recollection, meant to press contemporaries with a pattern they could not claim ignorance of. The intervening verses (14:10–21), summarized here rather than treated individually, dramatize the exchange between these earlier peoples and their messengers: the messengers' appeal to God's self-evidence as "Originator of the heavens and earth," the peoples' demand for a more tangible sign and their eventual threat to expel the messengers, and the messengers' declared reliance on God (tawakkul) in response — a passage that functions as a compact type-scene for prophetic rejection repeated throughout the Qur'an's historical narratives.

Q14:22 offers a vivid eschatological scene: on the Day of Judgment, Satan will address those who followed him, disclaiming responsibility — "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves..." The passage functions doctrinally to underline personal moral responsibility: even the arch-tempter denies any coercive power over human choice, leaving culpability with those who chose to follow him.

Q14:24–26 then presents one of the Qur'an's paradigmatic parables, warranting close, near-word-by-word attention: "Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky? It produces its fruit all the time, by permission of its Lord. And Allah presents examples for the people that perhaps they will be reminded. And the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, not having any stability." The "good word" (kalima tayyiba) is generally understood by exegetes as the declaration of faith (kalimat al-tawhid) or true, wholesome speech more broadly, likened to a tree whose stability lies below ground (firm roots) even as its visible growth reaches skyward, yielding continual fruit. Ibn Kathir records the widely transmitted identification of this "good tree" specifically with the date-palm (nakhla), attributed to a hadith in which the Prophet likened the believer to a palm tree — a tradition found in Sahih al-Bukhari, though exact wording and isnad should be verified against the primary text rather than assumed from paraphrase, and commentators differ on whether the hadith is meant as a direct gloss on this verse or as a related, independently transmitted teaching. Al-Zamakhshari, by contrast, foregrounds the parable's structural balance — firmly rooted good word against uprooted, unstable bad word — as a rhetorical argument about the comparative durability of true belief versus falsehood, giving comparatively less weight to the palm-tree identification. The two readings are not mutually exclusive so much as differently weighted: one anchoring the image in a specific botanical referent via hadith, the other treating the imagery as illustrative rhetoric whose force lies in the root/branch contrast itself.

Q14:28–29 shifts to a stern address: "Have you not considered those who exchanged the favor of Allah for disbelief and settled their people [in] the home of ruin? [It is] Hell, which they will [enter to] burn, and wretched is the settlement." Several exegetes, including reports transmitted via Ibn 'Abbas, associate this passage with the chieftains of Quraysh who perished at the Battle of Badr, reading it as a retrospective indictment of Meccan leadership's ingratitude for the security and prosperity the Ka'ba's sanctuary had afforded them. This attribution deserves a note of caution: Surah Ibrahim is conventionally dated as a Meccan surah, revealed prior to the Battle of Badr (a Medinan-period event), so a reading that ties the verse specifically to Badr's casualties likely reflects a later exegetical retrojection onto an earlier text — a pattern the sources flag explicitly — rather than a straightforward original occasion of revelation. The verse's more general sense, applicable independent of any Badr connection, concerns communities that trade divine favor for disbelief and thereby forfeit security for ruin. Q14:30–33 continue this indictment, describing how disbelievers "set up rivals to Allah to mislead [others] from His way," before pivoting to a further catalogue of divine favor — the subjugation of sun and moon, night and day, and "all that you asked of Him" — that leads directly into the surah's gratitude thesis.

Q14:34 offers a summary statement closely paired thematically with the surah's opening material on gratitude: "And He gave you from all that you asked of Him. And if you should count the favor of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful." This verse functions as something of a thesis statement for the surah's ethical argument, tying back to Q14:7, itself pivotal: "And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'" Together these two verses establish shukr (gratitude) and kufr (in the sense of ingratitude/denial) as a structuring binary across the surah, linking Musa's address to his people (14:7 itself occurring within that episode) to the general human condition described at 14:34.

Ibrahim's prayer (Q14:35–41)

The surah's most sustained and frequently cited devotional passage is Ibrahim's (Abraham's) prayer upon settling his descendants near the sacred House, and it merits close, near-verse-by-verse attention both for its content and its role in the Qur'an's Abrahamic framing of the Meccan sanctuary.

Q14:35: "And [mention, O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], when Ibrahim said, 'My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.'" The prayer opens with a petition for the security (aman) of the sanctuary city and a personal request for protection from idolatry — notable in that it is Abraham, traditionally regarded as the archetype of monotheistic devotion, who asks for such protection for himself and his own descendants, underscoring the Qur'anic view that no one, however elevated, is presumed immune from the pull toward shirk without divine safeguarding.

Q14:36 continues: "My Lord, indeed they have led astray many among the people. So whoever follows me — then he is of me; and whoever disobeys me — indeed, You are [yet] Forgiving and Merciful," a verse commonly read (with reference to idols mentioned in the preceding verse) as extending mercy even toward those who deviate, tempering the prayer's severity with an appeal to divine forgiveness.

Q14:37 contains perhaps the most historically resonant verse of the passage: "Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make hearts among the people incline toward them and provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful." This verse is traditionally read as referring to Abraham's settling of Hagar and Ishmael near the site of the Ka'ba, asking that the hearts of people be drawn toward this otherwise barren valley and that its inhabitants be sustained despite the land's lack of natural cultivation — a prayer traditional exegesis reads as answered in the Qur'an's own present, given Mecca's status as a pilgrimage and trade center. Nicolai Sinai and other source-critical scholars have noted the difficulty, from a Western academic standpoint, of dating this passage relative to the broader development of Meccan sanctuary traditions, and some scholarship reads such verses as reflecting an evolving Abrahamic framing of the Ka'ba's sanctity within the Qur'an's own corpus — a historical-

critical account that differs from, without necessarily directly contradicting, the traditional Islamic narrative of Abraham's original construction of the sanctuary (recounted more fully elsewhere in the Qur'an, e.g., Surah al-Baqarah). This is a point on which believing and academic-historical readers approach the same text with different disciplinary commitments and should be presented as such rather than harmonized artificially.

Q14:38–39 continue the prayer with an affirmation of divine omniscience — "Our Lord, indeed You know what we conceal and what we declare, and nothing is hidden from Allah in the earth or in the heaven" — followed by gratitude for the births of Ishmael and Isaac in Abraham's old age: "Praise to Allah, who has granted to me in old age Ismail and Ishaq. Indeed, my Lord is the Hearer of supplication." Q14:40–41 close the prayer with a petition that Abraham and his descendants remain steadfast in prayer, and a request for forgiveness "for me and for my parents and the believers the Day the account is established" — a verse whose request for the forgiveness of Abraham's father has drawn considerable classical discussion elsewhere in the Qur'anic corpus (given the father's association with idolatry in the wider Abrahamic narrative), though this juz' does not itself dwell on that tension at length. Ibn 'Ashur gives close attention to the precise syntax of this whole prayer, treating it as a model of supplication (du'a) in its structure — moving from petition for the sanctuary's security, to personal and communal protection from idolatry, to gratitude, to eschatological forgiveness — a pattern later Islamic devotional literature would draw upon as exemplary.

The closing warning (Q14:42–52)

The surah closes with a warning against complacency toward injustice: "And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do... He only delays them for a Day when eyes will stare [in horror]" (14:42), followed by a description of the Day of Judgment's terror and the fate of the wrongdoers, including the famous image of people rushing forth with necks outstretched, heads raised, gazes that do not return to them, and hearts empty (14:43). Q14:44–48 extend this scene: the wrongdoers will plead for a brief reprieve to answer the call and follow the messengers, only to be reminded that they once swore they would never perish, and the passage warns that the earth itself will be "changed to other than the earth, and the heavens [as well]" on

that Day — an image classical exegetes read as underscoring the utter dissolution of the present created order at the resurrection. The surah's final verses reiterate warning to those who took God's signs in mockery and closes with a summary declaration of the Qur'an's purpose, echoing the "Book" language of its opening: "This [Qur'an] is notification for the people, that they may be warned thereby and that they may know that He is but one God, and that those of understanding will be reminded" (14:52). This closing functions as a coda tying the surah's themes — gratitude and ingratitude, historical example, and Abraham's foundational prayer — back to the basic prophetic purpose announced at 14:1: bringing humanity from darkness into light.

Synthesis

Across this juz', three distinct literary modes converge on a shared theological argument. The conclusion of Yusuf demonstrates providence at the scale of an individual and family — patience and trust in God vindicated through decades of concealment and eventual disclosure, with the surah's own epilogue (12:111) explicitly naming moral instruction, rather than history for its own sake, as the purpose of such qasas. Ar-Ra'd then universalizes this providential logic to the cosmos itself, marshalling thunder, rain, mismatched fruits from common soil, and the durability of truth against the transience of falsehood as arguments for the same divine reality underlying Yusuf's personal story. Ibrahim closes the arc by grounding that same argument in sacred history and place — the recurring fates of Noah's people, 'Ad, and Thamud, and finally Abraham's own prayer over the valley that would become Mecca, tying the Egyptian setting of the juz's opening back to the Arabian sanctuary in and around which the Qur'an itself was being revealed. Read together, the juz' moves from narrative consolation, to cosmological argument, to prophetic-historical and devotional foundation — three registers united by a single insistence, restated at each turn, that gratitude, patience, and remembrance of God answer to a providence discernible in personal history, in nature, and in the fate of nations alike.

Juz’ 14: Surah al-Hijr 15:1 — Surah an-Nahl 16:128

Surah al-Hijr 15:1 through Surah an-Nahl 16:128

This juz'—the fourteenth of the Qur'anic mushaf's thirty sections—comprises the whole of Surah al-Hijr (15), a shorter late Meccan surah of ninety-nine verses, and the whole of Surah an-Nahl (16), a considerably longer and rhetorically developed late Meccan surah of one hundred twenty-eight verses whose closing verses are widely, though not unanimously, regarded as later Medinan additions tied to the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud. Together the two surahs represent a mature phase of Meccan proclamation: extended argumentation from the natural order for divine unity, prophetic narratives recounted in compressed form, direct address to the psychological posture of the disbelieving audience, and, toward the close of an-Nahl, a set of ethical, legal, and methodological instructions that anticipate concerns more fully elaborated in the Medinan surahs. Modern chronological scholarship, following Nöldeke-Schwally and echoed by scholars such as Angelika Neuwirth and Fazlur Rahman, situates both surahs in the later Meccan period on the strength of their comparatively developed argumentative structure, though such datings remain reconstructions rather than fixed certainties.

Surah al-Hijr: opening affirmations on revelation (15:1-18)

The surah opens with disbelievers' eventual regret—"Perhaps those who disbelieve will wish that they had been Muslims" (15:2)—a motif of eschatological reversal characteristic of late Meccan rhetoric, warning that present rejection will give way to future remorse once judgment is manifest. The surah then turns to a foundational statement on the Qur'an's own nature:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian." (15:9)

This verse has become the classical proof-text for the doctrine of the Qur'an's textual preservation (hifz al-Qur'an). Ibn Kathir's comment on this verse stresses that the divine guarantee of preservation distinguishes the Qur'an from earlier scriptures which, in the classical Muslim understanding, were entrusted to the custodianship of their respective communities and

were consequently vulnerable to alteration; he supports this with reports emphasizing the meticulousness of Qur'anic transmission among the Companions. The verse thus functions doctrinally as a self-referential claim about scriptural integrity, a feature that scholars such as Nicolai Sinai have examined as part of the Qur'an's developing self-conception as a coherent, bounded scriptural corpus—an interest shared, from a different angle, by classical exegesis itself.

The following verses (15:10-15) address the recurring pattern of prophets being mocked by their own peoples, insisting that such mockery is a constant of prophetic history rather than a peculiar hardship of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's mission. The passage then pivots into a brief but striking passage on cosmological guardianship: gates of heaven, and devils who attempt to eavesdrop on celestial affairs and are driven off by shooting stars (15:16-18). This ties into the broader Qur'anic cosmology of jinn and stars found elsewhere in the text and reflects a worldview in which the heavens are not merely inert space but a guarded domain, framing the created order itself as evidence of a governing, attentive divine will.

The creation of Adam and Iblis's refusal (15:26-44)

This passage narrates, in the version proper to this surah, the creation of Adam from "clay from an altered black mud" and the command to the angels to prostrate before him. Iblis alone refuses:

"[Allah] said, 'O Iblis, what is your reason for not being with those who prostrated?' [Iblis] said, 'Never would I prostrate to a human whom You created out of clay from an altered black mud.'" (15:32-33, paraphrased)

Rather than being expelled outright, Iblis is granted, upon request, a reprieve until the Day of Resurrection, whereupon he vows to make disobedience attractive to humankind and to mislead them all "except, among them, Your sincere servants" (15:39-40, paraphrased). This exempting clause—al-mukhlasin—recurs across the Qur'an's several retellings of this episode (also found in al-A'raf, al-Kahf, and Sad), and al-Tabari's commentary compares the wording variants across these parallel accounts, along with the grammatical construction of the exception clause, noting the theological problem it poses regarding the scope and limits of Iblis's influence over

different classes of human beings. This narrative functions less as a discrete historical episode than as a paradigmatic account of the origin of temptation and the moral architecture of human vulnerability to it—a theme common to the Qur'an, the Hebrew Bible's Genesis narrative (though without a serpent-figure equivalence), and later Christian angelology, each tradition working out its own account of the relationship between a rebellious spiritual being and human moral agency.

Paradise and mercy (15:45-50)

In brief, almost lyrical verses, the surah depicts the righteous "in gardens and springs," entering "in security," their hearts purified of rancor, "as brothers, on thrones, facing each other" (15:45-47, paraphrased)—an image of reconciled fraternity notably devoid of rivalry or resentment. The passage culminates in a declaration balancing mercy and severity: "Announce to My servants that it is I who am the Forgiving, the Merciful. And that it is My punishment which is the painful punishment" (15:49-50). This juxtaposition, placed deliberately side by side, is characteristic of the Qur'an's insistence on holding divine mercy and divine justice in constant tension rather than allowing either to eclipse the other.

Abraham's guests and the destruction of Lot's people (15:51-77)

The surah then recounts, in compressed form, the visit of angelic guests to Abraham who announce a son of knowledge (identified by the tradition with Isaac) despite Abraham's old age, provoking his astonished question. The same visitors proceed to Lot's town to warn of its impending destruction; Lot's distress at the arrival of guests he cannot protect from his townspeople's designs, his wife's fate among those who "remained behind" (implicitly complicit or unbelieving), and the eventual overturning of the town—"so We made the highest part of it its lowest and rained upon them stones of hard clay" (15:74, paraphrased)—are recounted briefly here relative to the fuller treatments found in Surah Hud and Surah al-'Ankabut. The concluding note that the site remains "on a road that is yet present" (15:76, paraphrased) reflects the Qur'an's recurring appeal to the visible, ongoing physical evidence of past judgments as a rhetorical device directed

at its immediate audience of Arabian caravan-travelers who would have passed such ruins.

The People of the Wood and Thamud (15:78-84)

A brief mention follows of the "People of the Wood" (Ashab al-Aykah), generally identified by the exegetical tradition with the people of Shu'ayb of Madyan, treated at greater length elsewhere in the Qur'an. The surah then turns to its namesake episode, the people of al-Hijr—identified with Thamud, whose rock-cut dwellings near what is today known as Mada'in Salih in northwest Arabia gave the surah its title. The passage recounts their rejection of the prophet Salih and of the sign of the she-camel, and their subsequent destruction by "the blast" at daybreak (15:83, paraphrased).

This narrative intersects with an attested episode in the Prophet's biography. Hadith reports found in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, cited by exegetes commenting on this passage, describe the Prophet passing through the ruins of al-Hijr during the expedition to Tabuk in 9 AH and instructing his companions not to enter the dwellings of a people who had been divinely punished except while weeping, and not to draw water from the site's wells or use its flour. Al-Qurtubi's commentary draws on geographical and historical notices about the site, treating this seerah episode as an implicit historical anchor lending concreteness to the Qur'anic narrative for its original audience, many of whom would have had direct or indirect familiarity with the ruins along the trade routes to Syria.

Closing exhortations of al-Hijr (15:85-99)

The surah's close gathers several distinct threads. It restates that the heavens, earth, and all between them were created "in truth" (bi'l-haqq, 15:85), grounding cosmic order in purposive justice rather than futility, and instructs the Prophet to "forgive with gracious forgiveness" (15:85). It then delivers one of the surah's most exegetically discussed statements:

"And We have certainly given you seven of the often repeated [verses] and the great Qur'an." (15:87)

The majority exegetical position, anchored in a hadith transmitted in Sahih al-Bukhari concerning Abu Sa'id ibn al-Mu'alla—in which the Prophet

identifies al-Fatihah as "the seven oft-repeated verses and the great Qur'an given to me"—identifies the "seven oft-repeated" with Surah al-Fatihah, whose seven verses are recited in every unit of the canonical prayer, thereby earning the description "repeated." Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both record this identification as dominant while noting a secondary opinion, attributed to some early authorities, that reads the phrase instead as referring to the seven lengthiest surahs of the Qur'an (al-sab' al-tiwal). Sinai and other scholars examining the Qur'an's self-referential vocabulary have treated such passages as evidence of an emerging awareness within the text of its own developing shape as a scriptural collection, a philological observation that runs alongside, rather than displacing, the classical exegetical debate.

The surah then warns the Prophet against "extending [his] eyes toward what We have given pairs of them to enjoy" (15:88, paraphrased)—a caution against envying the transient prosperity granted to disbelievers—and issues the command:

"Then declare what you are commanded and turn away from the polytheists." (15:94)

Sira literature associates this verse, though not with full precision as to chronological placement, with a shift from the Prophet's early, more restricted preaching to open and public proclamation of the message in Mecca. The verse's imperative force—sudu' (to declare openly, or to make plain)—has been read by the tradition as marking a decisive rhetorical and social turning point in the early mission, even if the exact sequencing of events relative to this specific revelation remains a matter of scholarly reconstruction rather than an explicit, datable occasion recorded in a single primary source. The following verses promise divine sufficiency against "the mockers"—identified in tafsir with particular Meccan chief opponents—and the surah closes with an instruction of striking simplicity and universality:

"And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty [death]." (15:99)

The term al-yaqin here, rendered "the certainty," is discussed at length in the exegetical tradition; the predominant reading takes it as a reference to death—the point at which all uncertainty about the reality of the unseen

dissolves into direct encounter—making this closing verse a statement of perpetual, lifelong religious obligation rather than one bounded by any particular stage of life or attainment.

Surah an-Nahl: opening and the catalogue of signs (16:1-21)

An-Nahl opens with characteristic late Meccan urgency: "The command of Allah is coming, so do not seek to hasten it. Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him" (16:1). This sets the tone for what Neuwirth's structural analyses and subsequent scholarship identify as one of the Qur'an's most developed exercises in cumulative natural theology. Rather than proceeding narrative by narrative, the surah's opening third assembles an extended catalogue—az-Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf gives close attention to the syntactic parallelism binding these verses together—moving through the creation of the heavens and earth "with truth," the creation of man from a drop and cattle for benefit and food, the raising of rain that produces "olives, palm trees, grapevines, and from all the fruits" (16:11, paraphrased), the subjugation of night, day, sun, moon and stars, the sea yielding "tender meat" and ornaments and ships that "plow through it," firmly set mountains, rivers, roads and landmarks, and finally the stars "by which they are [also] guided" (16:16). This list-style, cumulative rhetorical structure—treated in academic literature on Qur'anic composition as a hallmark of the developed Meccan surahs, distinct from the shorter oath-laden rhetoric of earlier material—builds an argument from the ordered particularity of creation toward the singular conclusion voiced at 16:17: "Then is He who creates like one who does not create? So will you not be reminded?" The following verses (16:18-21) press this argument further, noting that human beings "cannot count the favor of Allah" (16:18) and contrasting the living, knowing Creator with the lifeless idols "who create nothing, and they are [themselves] created" (16:20, paraphrased)—a polemical thrust that anticipates the fuller argument against polytheism developed in the surah's middle sections.

The argument from divine unity and human resurrection (16:22-50)

The surah's next movement (16:22-40) sharpens the polemic against associating partners with God, contrasting the disbelievers' arrogance and their eventual humiliation on the Day of Judgment with the example of

"those who emigrated for the sake of Allah" (16:41)—one of the verses some scholars, alongside the surah's closing section, tentatively classify as a Medinan or post-migration adjustment, given its apparent reference to the experience of emigration. The passage reiterates the constancy of prophetic messengership across history (16:36) and God's power over resurrection, using the analogy of rainfall reviving dead earth (16:65, treated further below) as an anticipatory motif. A brief but theologically dense passage (16:48-50) then returns to the natural-theology register, describing all created things—shadows, every living creature, and the angels themselves—as prostrating to God "without arrogance," reinforcing the surah's central argument that the entire created order testifies, in its very structure, to a single sovereign will.

Polemic against attributing daughters to God, and the condemnation of infanticide (16:51-65)

A central and much-discussed cluster of verses addresses the polytheists' theological inconsistency in ascribing daughters to God—a description they themselves regarded, per the text, as demeaning—while despising the birth of daughters among themselves:

"And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide." (16:58-59)

This passage is the central textual basis in the Qur'an for its condemnation of the pre-Islamic Arabian practice of female infanticide (wa'd al-banat). The verses operate on two registers simultaneously: a direct social condemnation of a documented practice, and a theological argument by analogy—the disbelievers' own revulsion at daughters exposes the incoherence of attributing daughters to the deity they otherwise claim to honor by that very ascription. The passage functions rhetorically as one of the Qur'an's most forceful and unambiguous moral interventions into a specific social custom, and it is regularly cited, in both classical and modern treatments, as

emblematic of the Qur'an's broader stance on the sanctity of the female child's life and dignity.

The favor-and-blessing verses: milk, wine's antecedent, and the bee (16:65-83)

This extended sequence catalogues divine provisions as evidence of benevolent design. On milk: "And indeed, for you in grazing livestock is a lesson. We give you drink from what is in their bellies—between excretion and blood—pure milk, palatable to drinkers" (16:66). The verse's physiological description—milk emerging, in this account, from a process situated between digestive waste and blood, yet arriving pure and palatable—is treated by commentators as an instance of the Qur'an's habit of dwelling on the ordinary and overlooked as sites of wonder. The following verse (16:67) mentions fruits of the date-palm and grapevine, "from which you take intoxicant and good provision"—a mention widely discussed in the literature on the gradual, staged prohibition of wine in Islamic legal history; commentators generally treat this as a preliminary, non-legislative reference (the verse itself does not issue a prohibition), part of a sequence completed only by explicit legal texts revealed later in the Medinan period.

The surah's namesake passage follows: "And your Lord inspired to the bee, 'Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees and [in] that which they construct.' Then eat from all the fruits and follow the ways of your Lord laid down [for you]"; then, "There emerges from their bellies a drink, varying in colors, in which there is healing for people. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give thought" (16:68-69, paraphrased). Ibn 'Ashur's al-Tahrir wa't-Tanwir situates this passage as illustrative of an-Nahl's broader method: the deployment of an ordinary natural phenomenon—here, the behavior of bees and the production of honey—as a rational proof (dalil) of providential design, rather than as mere poetic ornament. The description of divine "inspiration" (awha) directed at the bee has drawn comment across the tradition regarding the extension of instinctual, non-verbal guidance to non-rational creatures as a category distinct from prophetic revelation proper. Regarding "healing for people," a widely circulated hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari recounts the Prophet advising a man whose brother suffered a stomach ailment to give him honey; it should be noted, however, that this

hadith's connection to 16:69 is an association made in later commentarial literature rather than an explicit statement within the hadith itself linking the two texts—a distinction worth preserving for accuracy's sake. This passage has also attracted attention in modern apologetic and "scientific exegesis" literature discussing bee behavior and the properties of honey, an interpretive genre distinct from, though building upon, the classical commentary tradition.

The sequence continues with reflections on the variation of human lifespans and provision, the divine favor manifest in marriage and family ("Allah has made for you from yourselves mates and has made for you from your mates sons and grandchildren," 16:72, paraphrased), and the provision of clothing and shelter as further signs of providential care (16:80-81), rounding out the surah's sustained meditation on the domestic and agrarian textures of everyday life as loci of theological meaning.

Comprehensive ethical exhortation (16:90-100)

Among the most frequently cited verses in the entire Qur'an appears here: "Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded" (16:90). Az-Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf gives particular attention to the semantic range of 'adl (justice) and ihsan (good conduct, or conduct exceeding mere justice) in this verse, treating their pairing as a structural summary of the whole of Qur'anic ethics—justice as a baseline obligation, ihsan as a supererogatory excellence beyond it. Tradition reports, with some variation in the strength of the transmission concerning the specific practice, describe this verse being recited regularly in the Friday sermon (khutbah) from an early period, a practice popularly associated with the caliphate of 'Umar though the precise chain of transmission for that specific attribution is debated among scholars; nonetheless, the verse's later liturgical prominence testifies to its perceived centrality.

The following verses address the fulfillment of covenants and oaths, and warn against using oaths as instruments of deception between people (16:91-92), before turning to the formula preceding Qur'anic recitation: "So when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the expelled

[from His mercy]" (16:98). This verse is regularly cited as the textual basis for the isti'adhah (seeking refuge) formula recited before Qur'anic recitation in Islamic liturgical practice. The passage closes with an affirmation of gender-inclusive divine reward: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer—We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do" (16:97). This verse is regularly identified as a key Qur'anic statement establishing that righteous deeds and their reward apply without differentiation by sex, a point of some significance in comparative discussions of Qur'anic anthropology.

Abrogation, revelation, and the accusation of human instruction (16:101-105)

"And when We substitute a verse in place of a verse—and Allah is most knowing of what He sends down—they say, 'You, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], are but an inventor [of lies].' But most of them do not know" (16:101, paraphrased). This verse has become the primary textual anchor for the classical doctrine of naskh (abrogation), the theological and legal mechanism by which certain Qur'anic rulings were understood to supersede others revealed earlier. John Burton's academic work, along with more recent discussion summarized in Sinai's scholarship, has examined this verse as a theological accommodation addressing the phenomenon of legal and textual change across the span of the revelation, treating it as a rare instance of the Qur'an offering an explicit rationale for its own internal development. The passage identifies the "Holy Spirit" (Ruh al-Qudus), understood by the tradition as Gabriel, as the agent bringing down revelation "with truth" to confirm believers (16:102), and directly rebuts an accusation circulating among the Meccan opposition: "And We certainly know that they say, 'It is only a human being who teaches him.' The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, and this Qur'an is [in] a clear Arabic language" (16:103). Al-Tabari and al-Qurtubi's classical discussions of this verse address reports that the Meccan opposition attributed the Prophet's teachings to a foreign informant—variously identified in different traditions—and the verse's rebuttal rests on the linguistic argument that such a source's own tongue was not Arabic, whereas the Qur'an itself is composed in clear Arabic, a point

later folded into the broader doctrine of the Qur'an's inimitability (i'jaz) specifically with respect to its Arabic eloquence.

The verse on coerced renunciation (16:106-111)

Falling within this same broad section is one of the surah's most consequential legal-theological statements: "Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief... except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith... but those who [willingly] open their breast to disbelief, upon them is wrath from Allah" (16:106, paraphrased). This is the principal Qur'anic proof-text on the permissibility of outward dissimulation under duress while inward faith remains intact—a doctrine with later ramifications for discussions of taqiyyah. Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, and al-Qurtubi transmit an account, widely repeated in the tafsir tradition, linking this verse to the persecution of 'Ammar ibn Yasir, who is reported to have been forced by Meccan captors to verbally renounce the Prophet while his heart remained firm, after which the Prophet reassured him that his faith remained sound. The episode is further connected in sira and hadith literature to the martyrdom of 'Ammar's mother, Sumayyah bint Khabbat—traditionally regarded as the first martyr of the Muslim community—though it should be noted that the specific evidentiary chains (isnads) linking this precise verse to this precise historical occasion vary in strength across the sources, a caveat classical scholars themselves sometimes register even while transmitting the account. The following verses (16:109-111) reiterate the theme of divine knowledge of hidden intention, describing those who emigrated after persecution and then patiently endured as recipients of divine forgiveness and mercy (16:110)—verses that some scholars, along with 16:41, tentatively assign to a later, post-migration layer of the text on account of their apparent reference to the experience of hijrah.

The parable of the ungrateful town, and dietary law (16:112-119)

The surah offers a brief parable: "Allah presents an example: a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it denied the favors of Allah. So Allah made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear for what they had been doing" (16:112, paraphrased). Some commentators read this, though not with full unanimity,

as an oblique allusion to Mecca's own experience of famine amid its rejection of the Prophet's message; the text itself, however, presents it in general parabolic terms rather than naming a specific referent. This is followed by dietary regulations—permitted and forbidden foods—echoing, in a Meccan register, themes elaborated at greater legal length in the Medinan surahs al-Baqarah and al-Ma'idah, along with a caution against falsely declaring things lawful or unlawful "to attribute lies to Allah" (16:116).

Abraham as monotheistic exemplar and the Sabbath (16:120-124)

Toward the surah's close, Abraham is presented in striking terms: "Indeed, Abraham was a nation [ummah], devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of those who associate others with Allah" (16:120, paraphrased)—describing a single individual as constituting, in himself, an ummah, a formulation much discussed in treatments of Qur'anic Abrahamic typology as expressing the density and exemplary completeness of his monotheistic devotion, transcending mere individual biography. The Prophet is then instructed to follow "the millah of Ibrahim, a monotheist [hanif]" (16:123, paraphrased), reinforcing the Qur'an's broader project of situating Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's mission within, and as a restoration of, the pure Abrahamic religion antecedent to both Judaism and Christianity as historically constituted. A subsequent verse states that "the Sabbath was only made obligatory for those who differed over it" (16:124, paraphrased)—a statement that has historically featured in Muslim-Jewish polemical and comparative discussion regarding the Sabbath's origin and its status as, in the Qur'anic view, a specific historical dispensation rather than a universal divine ordinance binding on all monotheists.

Da'wah methodology and the closing verses (16:125-128)

The surah's penultimate movement offers what has become the foundational Qur'anic statement on the methodology of religious invitation: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided" (16:125). This verse has served across Islamic intellectual history as the primary textual charter for da'wah methodology, its tripartite formula—wisdom (hikmah),

good instruction (maw'izah hasanah), and disputation in the best manner (jidal bi'llati hiya ahsan)—providing a durable framework subsequently elaborated by jurists, theologians, and Sufi authors alike.

The final three verses of the surah are widely regarded by the classical and academic traditions alike as Medinan, or as later adjustments to an otherwise Meccan text, tied specifically to the aftermath of the Battle of Uhud in 3 AH: "And if you punish [an enemy], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed. But if you are patient, it is better for the [one who is] patient" (16:126). Al-Wahidi's Asbab al-Nuzul, as transmitted and echoed by al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir, records that upon seeing the mutilated body of his uncle Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib after Uhud—mutilation carried out by Hind bint 'Utbah and her associates—the Prophet vowed to mutilate thirty Meccans in retaliation. This verse was then revealed, restraining that vow by enjoining strict proportionality in any retaliation and commending patience as the superior course; sira sources report that the Prophet subsequently exercised forbearance rather than carrying out the mutilation he had initially vowed. Given the significance of this attribution, it is worth noting that while the substance of the account is widely transmitted, the precise isnads vary in strength, a caveat classical compilers of asbab al-nuzul themselves sometimes register. The surah then closes: "And be patient, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], and your patience is not but through Allah. And do not grieve over them and do not be in distress over what they conspire. Indeed, Allah is with those who fear Him and those who are doers of good" (16:127-128). The final phrase—"Allah is with those who fear Him and those who are doers of good"—returns the surah, after its extended detour through law, natural theology, and now battlefield ethics, to the register of quiet reassurance with which so much of the Meccan corpus is concerned. Regarding the classification of these closing verses, and possibly also 16:41 and 16:110-111, as Medinan insertions into an otherwise late Meccan surah, both traditional and academic scholarship generally concur that an-Nahl is predominantly a Meccan composition with a small number of later adjustments reflecting the post-Uhud context, though there is some variation among scholars as to exactly which verses should be so classified—a matter of ongoing scholarly reconstruction rather than settled consensus.

Synthesis

Read together, al-Hijr and an-Nahl display a Meccan proclamation reaching toward comprehensiveness. Al-Hijr compresses several prophetic narratives—Iblis's fall, Abraham's guests, Lot's people, Thamud—into a rapid sequence oriented around themes of judgment, mercy, and the guarantee of the revelation's own preservation, closing on the perpetual obligation of worship "until certainty" arrives. An-Nahl broadens the argumentative register still further, building a cumulative case for divine unity out of the ordinary furniture of the natural world—cattle, rain, the sea, the bee—while also addressing social ills (infanticide), liturgical practice (the refuge formula, the identification of al-Fatihah), textual self-understanding (the guardianship and abrogation verses), and finally methodology and ethics of conduct, both in peaceable invitation (16:125) and, in its coda, in the discipline of proportionate response to violence (16:126). The juz' thus moves from cosmology and narrative toward an increasingly practical register, anticipating—without yet fully entering—the legal and communal concerns that will dominate the Medinan surahs, and it closes, fittingly, on the twin virtues of God-fearing restraint (taqwa) and active goodness (ihsan) that the tradition reads as an epitome of the whole Qur'anic ethical project.

Juz’ 15: Surah al-Isra 17:1 — Surah al-Kahf 18:74

Surah al-Isra 17:1 through Surah al-Kahf 18:74

Juz' Fifteen: Surah al-Isra (complete) and Surah al-Kahf 18:1–74

Juz' Fifteen opens near the very end of the Meccan period and carries the reader through two surahs whose pairing is not accidental in the traditional ordering of the mushaf: Surah al-Isra (17), taken in its entirety, and the first seventy-four verses of Surah al-Kahf (18), whose remainder falls into the following juz'. Al-Isra begins with the Prophet's Night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and moves into an extended body of ethical legislation, polemic against Meccan disbelief, and reassurance addressed to a Prophet under mounting social and rhetorical pressure. Al-Kahf, by contrast, is built almost entirely of narrative frames — the Sleepers of the Cave, the parable of the two garden-owners, and the beginning of the Moses-Khidr journey — each functioning, as Ibn 'Ashur observed, as a meditation on a distinct form of human trial (fitna): of religion, of wealth, and of knowledge, with a fourth trial, of power, opening in the story of Dhu'l-Qarnayn just as this juz' closes. The two surahs are linked also by a shared occasion: several of al-Kahf's central narratives are traditionally reported as responses to a set of test-questions posed to the Prophet by the Quraysh, reportedly coached by Jewish informants in Medina — questions concerning the youths of the cave, a far-traveling king, and the nature of the soul (al-ruh), the last of which receives its answer within al-Isra itself at 17:85. The juz' thus moves fluidly between law, cosmology, prophetic biography, and parable, united by a recurring concern with the limits of human knowledge before divine wisdom.

The Night Journey (Q17:1)

The surah opens with a single, dense verse that has generated an enormous exegetical literature:

"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing." (Q17:1)

Every element of this verse repays attention. The opening exclamation, *Subhana* ("Exalted is He" / "Glory be to Him"), is the only instance in the Qur'an where a surah begins with this particular formula, immediately signaling that what follows is being presented as a wonder transcending ordinary expectation. The verse names its subject not "Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him" but "His Servant" ('abdihi), a designation classical commentators read as an honorific emphasizing the perfection of servanthood (`ubudiyyah) achieved in this event, rather than diminishment. The journey is "by night" (lailan), from al-Masjid al-Haram — the sacred precinct at Mecca — to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, "the farthest mosque," whose surroundings God has blessed. Al-Tabari, in his *Jami' al-Bayan*, assembles numerous chains of transmission on this verse and preserves genuine early disagreement — attributed variously to A'isha and to Ibn 'Abbas — over whether the Prophet's body or only his spirit undertook the journey, and further, whether he beheld God directly during the ascent that later tradition attaches to this event (the Mi'raj). Al-Tabari does not force these reports into full harmony, leaving the disagreement visible in his compilation. Ibn Kathir, in *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, favors the majority position that the journey was bodily, citing the weight of hadith testimony, and addresses directly the historical-geographical difficulty that no structure formally called "al-Aqsa" stood at Jerusalem in the Prophet's lifetime; he resolves this by noting that the Qur'anic term denotes the sanctified site itself — the Temple Mount — rather than a specific standing building bearing that name at the time.

The extended narrative substance behind this compressed verse is preserved in hadith rather than in the Qur'anic text itself. Both Sahih al-Bukhari (e.g., 3887, 3207) and Sahih Muslim (162–165) transmit detailed accounts of the journey to Jerusalem, the ascent through the seven heavens, encounters with earlier prophets at each station, and the culminating imposition of the five daily prayers — a report that later exegetes read as explaining why prayer becomes so prominent a concern later in this same surah (17:78–79). From the standpoint of seerah, the Isra and Mi'raj are commonly dated by biographers to roughly a year before the Hijra, during or shortly after the period known as 'Am al-Huzn, the Year of Sorrow, following the deaths of Khadija and Abu Talib — a season of acute personal and communal hardship for the Prophet in Mecca. Several sirah works

accordingly read the journey as a moment of consolation preceding the eventual emigration to Medina, though the Qur'anic verse itself makes no explicit reference to this biographical context; the connection is a matter of historical inference rather than textual statement.

From the academic side, Angelika Neuwirth's chronological-literary approach situates al-Isra's opening within a developing Qur'anic sense of sacred geography that binds Mecca to Jerusalem, reading the verse partly against the backdrop of the Qur'an's engagement with biblical and post-biblical Jewish and Christian literary traditions concerning the Temple Mount, rather than treating it purely as a historical report to be verified or disputed on its own terms. This is offered by Neuwirth as one interpretive lens among several current in Qur'anic studies, not as a settled consensus displacing the traditional account.

The Fate of the Children of Israel (Q17:2–8)

The surah moves immediately from the Night Journey to a recollection of the Torah given to Moses and a prophecy concerning two periods of corruption (fasad) among the Children of Israel, each followed by divine chastisement through foreign armies sent against them, and a final promise of mercy should they return to righteousness. Many exegetes read these two episodes as corresponding to the two destructions of the Jerusalem Temple, though the historical referents are treated with varying specificity across the tradition. The passage functions rhetorically as a bridge: having just journeyed to the site associated with the prophetic line of Israel, the surah pauses to meditate on covenant, transgression, and consequence — themes that recur throughout the surah's subsequent legal and eschatological material.

Guidance, Recompense, and Human Impatience (Q17:9–21)

A shorter transitional passage follows, easily skimmed past but structurally important. The surah declares that "this Qur'an guides to that which is most suitable" (17:9), promising reward for the righteous and warning of painful punishment for those who deny the Hereafter, before turning to two much-cited generalizations about human nature: "man supplicates for evil as he supplicates for good, and man is ever hasty" (17:11), and the statement that

night and day are appointed signs, the night's sign "blotted out" and the day's made visible "that you may seek bounty from your Lord" (17:12). The passage then introduces the image of each person's deeds fastened to their neck (17:13) and a book presented on the Day of Judgment that each will read in self-accounting (17:14) — verses regularly cited in discussions of individual moral responsibility, alongside the accompanying principle that "no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" (17:15) and that God does not punish a people until a warner has been sent to them (17:15). A brief remark on the destruction of past communities "when We intend to destroy a city" (17:16) leads into a contrast between those who desire only "the immediate" (al-'ajilah) and receive it in variable measure, and those who strive for the Hereafter with genuine faith, whose effort will be appreciated (17:18–19). Commentators generally read this cluster as establishing the theological groundwork — divine justice, individual accountability, the priority of the Hereafter — upon which the following ethical legislation is then built.

The Ethical Core: Q17:22–39

The central legislative passage of the surah, sometimes termed its "ethical decalogue," unfolds across roughly eighteen verses and has attracted sustained fiqh-oriented commentary, most extensively from al-Qurtubi in *al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*. The passage opens with the categorical statement:

"And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], 'uff,' and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.'" (Q17:23–24)

The juxtaposition here — exclusive worship of God bound immediately to kindness toward parents — is treated by classical commentators, and echoed in Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading of the Qur'an, as paradigmatic of the text's tendency to fuse theological monotheism with concrete social ethics rather than leave tawhid as an abstract doctrine. Al-Qurtubi treats birr al-walidayn (filial devotion) here as approaching the status of an obligation

subordinate only to worship of God itself, and draws out legal implications for the treatment of aging parents specifically, reading the prohibition of even the mild expression of irritation ("uff") as establishing a floor beneath which no believer's conduct toward parents may fall, regardless of provocation.

The passage continues through a sequence of further injunctions: giving relatives, the needy, and travelers their due without extravagance or miserliness (17:26–29); the prohibition of killing children out of fear of poverty, "for We provide for them and for you" (17:31); the prohibition of approaching zina, described as "an immorality and an evil way" (17:32); the prohibition of unlawful killing (17:33); the duty to safeguard orphans' property (17:34); the obligation to fulfill contracts and covenants (17:34); the command to give full measure and weigh with an even balance (17:35); and the epistemological caution:

"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart — about all those [one] will be questioned." (Q17:36)

This verse has been drawn upon in later legal-theoretical and epistemological discussion as a scriptural basis for caution against unfounded claims and unverified testimony, since each of the three named faculties — hearing, sight, and heart (understood as encompassing reason and intention) — is presented as individually accountable. The passage concludes with a prohibition of arrogant walking upon the earth (17:37) and a summary verse (17:39) explicitly framing the preceding list as "part of wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you." Al-Qurtubi reads several of these prohibitions — particularly against infanticide and zina — as targeted correctives to specific pre-Islamic ("jahili") social practices, situating the passage as much in social history as in abstract ethics.

Polemic Against Shirk and the Denial of Resurrection (Q17:40–52)

The surah turns next to a polemical address to Meccan polytheists who, in a practice the Qur'an treats as both theologically incoherent and morally revealing, attributed daughters to God while themselves regarding daughters as a source of shame (a theme elaborated further in other surahs, e.g., al-Nahl). This section reaffirms strict tawhid, ridicules the notion of associate

deities interceding or possessing independent power, and previews objections to bodily resurrection — the disbelievers' rhetorical question of how bones reduced to dust could be restored to life — met with the counter-assertion that the God who created them the first time is fully capable of a second creation. This exchange establishes a recurring Qur'anic argumentative pattern, restated in various forms elsewhere in the text: the analogy from first creation to resurrection as the more modest of the two acts.

Prayer, Adam and Iblis, and Prophetic Reassurance (Q17:53–84)

This long stretch is genuinely mixed in content and is best treated as a passage-block rather than verse by verse. It includes instruction on gentle speech even in interfaith and intra-communal disputation (17:53), a brief recapitulation of the Adam-Iblis narrative — Iblis's refusal to prostrate before Adam and his subsequent claim upon Adam's progeny (17:61–65) — presented here in compressed form relative to its fuller treatment in Surah al-A'raf, and material on prayer and Qur'anic recitation:

"Establish prayer at the decline of the sun [from its meridian] until the darkness of the night and [also] the Qur'an of dawn. Indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed." (Q17:78)

Several commentators, along with certain hadith traditions, connect this verse and the following one (17:79, concerning the supererogatory night vigil, tahajjud) to the broader timing structure of the five daily prayers and to material found also in Surah al-Muzzammil. The passage subsequently offers reassurance to the Prophet amid intensifying Meccan opposition, including the striking verses:

"And indeed, they were about to tempt you away from that which We revealed to you in order to invent about Us something else, and then they would have taken you as a friend. And if We had not strengthened you, you would have almost inclined to them a little." (Q17:73–74)

Exegetes commonly, though not uniformly, connect this to reports of Quraysh pressure on the Prophet to make some concession regarding treatment of their deities — variants of the tradition mention proposals

involving the Black Stone or a compromise formula of mutual religious accommodation — though the precise historical episode behind the verse is treated by some scholars as more thematic than tied to one single, firmly documented occasion of revelation.

The Question of the Soul (Q17:85) and the Proof of Inimitability (Q17:88)

Among the pivotal verses of the surah is the terse response to an inquiry about the nature of the soul:

"And they ask you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], about the soul. Say, 'The soul is of the affair of my Lord. And mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little.'" (Q17:85)

The traditional occasion of revelation, preserved via Ibn 'Abbas and recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari (4553) and elsewhere, situates this verse within the same complex of test-questions mentioned above: Quraysh, reportedly at the suggestion of Jewish scholars in Medina, put three questions to the Prophet — concerning the youths of the cave, a far-traveling figure, and the ruh — as a means of testing his claim to prophecy against material thought to require access to scriptural or esoteric knowledge outside Arabian pagan tradition. Reports vary as to whether the questioners were Meccan pagans acting on Jewish coaching or Jewish scholars more directly involved, and the chain of transmission (partly preserved in Ibn Ishaq's Sira as reconstructed by Ibn Hisham) is treated with some caution by later scholars. Az-Zamakhshari, in *al-Kashshaf*, draws particular attention to the rhetorical economy of the Qur'an's answer: the verse does not elaborate on the nature of the soul at all but instead redirects the questioner toward the limits of human knowledge as such. Zamakhshari, consistent with his broader Mu'tazili interest in divine wisdom (hikma), reads this deliberate curtailment as itself instructive — the withholding of an answer functioning as a lesson in epistemic humility rather than an evasion.

Later in the same discourse, the surah offers one of the Qur'an's clearest self-referential claims to inimitability:

"Say, 'If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants.'" (Q17:88)

This verse constitutes a principal proof-text for the doctrine of i'jaz al-Qur'an, the Qur'an's inimitability, a concept elaborated at length in later Islamic literary and theological writing, though such elaboration lies substantially beyond the verse's immediate context here.

Moses and Pharaoh, Compressed (Q17:101–104)

Near the surah's close, the Moses-Pharaoh narrative appears in markedly compressed form — a brief mention of the nine signs given to Moses, Pharaoh's accusation of sorcery, his eventual drowning, and a promise of the Israelites' return to "the land" — a treatment far shorter than the extended narrations of the same material found in surahs such as al-A'raf, Ta-Ha, and al-Shu'ara. The brevity here suits the surah's broader rhetorical rhythm, in which most narrative material serves as illustrative punctuation to legal and theological argument rather than as sustained storytelling; the sustained storytelling is instead reserved for the surah that follows.

Closing Verses: Recitation, Prostration, and the Names of God (Q17:105–111)

Al-Isra closes with a short cluster of verses returning to the theme of revelation itself: the Qur'an was sent down "in truth, and in truth it has descended" (17:105), and was revealed "in stages" so that it might be recited to people "over a long period" (17:106) — a verse frequently cited in discussions of the gradual, occasion-responsive character of Qur'anic revelation. The passage describes the emotional response of those "given knowledge before it," who fall down in prostration weeping upon hearing it recited (17:107–109), before the surah ends with an instruction on the divine names — "call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful; whichever you call, to Him belong the best names" (17:110) — and a final declaration of God's absolute self-sufficiency, free of offspring, partner, or need of protection out of weakness (17:111). This closing doxology mirrors, in miniature, the surah's opening Subhana, framing the entirety of al-Isra within an envelope of praise.

Surah al-Kahf: Frame and Purpose (Q18:1–8)

Al-Kahf opens with praise for the clarity and reliability of the revealed Book and an explicit rejection of any who would attribute a son to God:

"[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who has sent down upon His Servant the Book and has not made therein any deviance... And to warn those who say, 'Allah has taken a son.'" (Q18:1, 4, paraphrased continuation)

This doxological opening functions, as Ibn 'Ashur observes in *al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir*, as a thematic frame for the entire surah, which he reads as organized around four distinct trials (fitan): the trial of religion in the Cave narrative, the trial of wealth in the parable of the two gardens, the trial of knowledge in the Moses-Khidr episode, and the trial of power in the story of Dhu'l-Qarnayn, whose narrative begins at the very close of this juz'. Ibn 'Ashur's systematized four-fold reading, though building on observations present in earlier exegesis, has become the most frequently cited articulation of the surah's structural unity in later homiletic and academic literature alike. The section also anticipates the Prophet's grief over Meccan rejection, closing with a warning that he should not destroy himself with sorrow "over their footsteps, if they do not believe in this message" (18:6).

The Sleepers of the Cave (Q18:9–26)

This is the passage of the juz' most demanding of sustained, near verse-by-verse attention, both because of its narrative density and its exegetical sensitivity. The account opens:

"Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?" (Q18:9)

The rhetorical framing — "or have you thought" — itself signals to the audience that what follows, however striking, is not in fact the most remarkable of God's signs, a deliberate deflation that recurs in the Qur'an's treatment of miracle narratives. The story recounts a group of young believers who flee religious persecution and take refuge in a cave, praying:

"Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance." (Q18:10)

God then casts them into sleep for a span of years:

"So We cast [a cover of sleep] over their ears within the cave for a number of years. Then We awakened them to know which of the two factions was most precise in calculating what [extent] they had remained in time." (Q18:11–12)

Upon waking, the youths themselves are uncertain of the duration of their sleep, estimating "a day or part of a day" (18:19), and send one among them into the town to purchase food discreetly, fearing discovery. Their eventual disclosure and the town's astonishment form the narrative's climax, after which the passage turns markedly didactic, addressing the subsequent human dispute over the sleepers' exact number:

"They will say there were three, the fourth of them being their dog; and they will say there were five, the sixth of them being their dog — guessing at the unseen; and they will say seven, and the eighth of them was their dog. Say, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], 'My Lord is most knowing of their number.'" (Q18:22)

Ibn Kathir, commenting on this passage, draws on materials attributed to Ka'b al-Ahbar and Wahb ibn Munabbih — figures associated with Isra'iliyyat, reports of Jewish and Christian provenance absorbed into early Islamic exegesis — regarding possible numbers and durations, but he explicitly cautions against confident numerical claims, noting that this caution aligns with the Qur'an's own rhetorical restraint at 18:22, which pointedly declines to settle the matter and instead redirects the reader toward God's exclusive knowledge of it. This is a significant methodological moment in the tafsir tradition: even where extra-Qur'anic material is available and cited, mainstream exegesis treats the text's own reticence as instructive rather than as an invitation to speculative certainty.

From a comparative-religions perspective, the Ashab al-Kahf narrative has long been noted, in academic scholarship extending back to nineteenth-century orientalist observation and refined by later specialists, to bear substantial resemblance to the Christian legend of the Seven Sleepers of

Ephesus, attested in Syriac sources associated with Jacob of Serugh. The nature and direction of any literary relationship between the Qur'anic account and this earlier Christian legend remains a matter of ongoing academic discussion; classical Muslim exegesis, where it addresses the matter at all, treats the Qur'anic narrative as an independent revealed account rather than as dependent upon or derived from the Syriac legend, and this chapter notes the comparative observation without adjudicating between the two frameworks.

A hadith attributed to the Prophet, recorded in Sunan al-Tirmidhi and elsewhere with varying degrees of authentication across collections, recommends reciting Surah al-Kahf on Fridays, a practice later associated by many scholars with protection from the trial of the Dajjal (the Antichrist) — a connection that resonates with Ibn 'Ashur's broader reading of the surah as organized around successive trials, here extended eschatologically. Given variation in the hadith's wording and chains across sources, it is appropriately treated with some caution regarding its precise authentication.

"If Allah Wills": Q18:23–24 and Its Occasion

Embedded within the surrounding material is a short but celebrated verse of religious etiquette:

"And never say of anything, 'Indeed, I will do that tomorrow,' except [when adding], 'If Allah wills.' And remember your Lord when you forget [it] and say, 'Perhaps my Lord will guide me to what is nearer than this to right conduct.'" (Q18:23–24)

The traditional occasion of revelation ties this verse to the same episode of Quraysh test-questions discussed above: having been asked about the Cave-dwellers, the far-traveling king, and the soul, the Prophet reportedly indicated he would answer "tomorrow" without qualifying the statement with "in sha' Allah," resulting in a reported delay in revelation of roughly two weeks — a delay traditional sources present as itself instructive, teaching that even the Prophet's speech about the future is properly subject to this qualification. Al-Qurtubi discusses the passage's legal and devotional significance, treating the "in sha' Allah" clause primarily as an adab, an etiquette of speech regarding future intentions, rather than as a strict legal

condition (shart) that would, for instance, void an oath or vow if omitted — a distinction that becomes relevant in later fiqh discussions of oaths (ayman) and vows (nudhur), where jurists debate the precise legal weight of such a qualifying clause when actually appended to a given oath, as distinct from the general devotional counsel offered here.

The Rebuke Concerning the Poor Companions (Q18:28)

Shortly after, the surah instructs the Prophet:

"And keep yourself patient with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance... and do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance." (Q18:28)

Several reports, preserved with differing chains in Ibn Kathir and earlier sources, connect this verse to a request by Meccan chiefs that the Prophet exclude his lower-status followers — variously named across reports as Bilal, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Suhayb, and Khabbab ibn al-Aratt — from his gatherings, so that the elite might attend without any perceived loss of social standing. The verse is read as a direct rebuke of this request, and a broadly parallel report is associated with a similar verse in Surah al-An'am (6:52). Read in seerah context, this episode illustrates the socioeconomic dimension of early Meccan opposition to the Prophet's message: resistance rooted not merely in theological disagreement but in anxiety over the social leveling implicit in the new community's composition.

Freedom and Limit of Belief (Q18:29)

Immediately following is one of the Qur'an's most frequently cited statements on the nature of belief:

"And say, 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills — let him believe; and whoever wills — let him disbelieve.'" (Q18:29)

This verse is regularly invoked in discussions of religious freedom and non-compulsion in Islamic thought, often read alongside the well-known declaration in Surah al-Baqarah that "there is no compulsion in religion." At the same time, the verse's immediate continuation warns of the fire prepared for wrongdoers, and its precise relationship to later verses

sometimes associated with more forceful engagement with disbelief has been a subject of ongoing discussion among exegetes regarding abrogation (naskh) — a debate this chapter notes without resolving, since classical opinion on the applicability of abrogation to this particular verse is not uniform.

The Parable of the Two Gardens (Q18:32–44)

The surah's second major narrative unit presents a parable of two men, one granted two lush gardens and material abundance, who grows arrogant and, addressing his companion, denies the resurrection: "I do not think that this will perish... ever. And I do not think the Hour will occur" (18:35–36). His companion counters with a reminder of God's creative power and the impermanence of worldly gain. The arrogant man's presumption is answered narratively rather than merely argumentatively: his garden is destroyed, "and he began to turn his hands about [in dismay] over what he had spent on it, while it had collapsed upon its trellises" (18:42). The passage closes with the reflection that "there, authority belongs [entirely] to Allah, the Truth. He is best in reward and best in outcome" (18:44). This parable is widely read, consistent with Ibn 'Ashur's structural framework, as addressing the trial of wealth specifically, and several commentators connect its concerns to the temptations of prosperity facing the Meccan mercantile elite of the Prophet's own audience, without the passage naming any specific historical individual.

The Parable of Worldly Life and the Day of Reckoning (Q18:45–59)

Immediately following the garden parable, the surah offers a companion image on the same theme: the life of this world is likened to rain that produces abundant vegetation, which then becomes "dry remnants, scattered by the winds" (18:45), reinforcing the preceding narrative's lesson on the transience of material flourishing. Wealth and children, the passage adds, are "the adornment of the worldly life," while "the enduring good deeds are better with your Lord in reward and better in [one's] hope" (18:46) — a verse frequently paired homiletically with the garden parable for their shared concern with the trial of prosperity. The section then turns to eschatology, describing the mountains set in motion and the earth made

bare on the Day when humanity is presented before God "in rows" (18:47–48), and the individual reckoning by a book in which "they will say, 'Oh, woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it?'" (18:49). A brief return to the Adam-Iblis narrative follows — recalling the command to the angels to prostrate, Iblis's refusal, and his subsequent enmity toward humankind (18:50) — echoing, in compressed form, the same episode treated in al-Isra 17:61–65 and told more fully in al-A'raf. The unit closes with a meditation on why the disbelievers of Mecca were not deterred by the destruction of earlier communities before them (18:55–59), reinforcing the surah's broader concern with the limits of human perception before signs that ought to instruct but frequently do not.

The Meeting of the Two Seas and the Encounter with Khidr (Q18:60–74, continuing beyond this juz')

The final major narrative opened within this juz' begins with Moses' resolve:

"And [mention] when Moses said to his boy-servant, 'I will not cease [traveling] until I reach the junction of the two seas, or continue for a long period.'" (Q18:60)

The primary hadith elaboration of this episode, narrated by Ubayy ibn Ka'b via Sa'id ibn Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbas and preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari (122, 4725) and Sahih Muslim, recounts that Moses was once asked who among people was most learned, and answered that he himself was, prompting God to direct him toward a servant possessing knowledge Moses lacked — namely, Khidr — at the junction of the two seas. Moses and his servant journey to this meeting point, and, having lost track of a fish intended as a marker of the location, discover the site and there encounter a servant of God:

"So they found a servant from among Our servants to whom We had given mercy from Us and had taught him from Us a knowledge." (Q18:65)

Moses requests to follow him "on [condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment," to which Khidr replies:

"Indeed, with me you will never be able to have patience. And how can you have patience for what you do not encompass in knowledge?" (Q18:67–68)

This juz' closes at verse 74, midway through the ensuing sequence of three episodes — the boring of a hole in a poor fishing boat, and (at the edge of this juz') the killing of a youth — each of which provokes Moses' objection and each of which Khidr later explains as concealing a deeper wisdom inaccessible to Moses' law-bound perspective; the full explanations, along with the third episode (the restoration of a wall in a town that had refused the travelers hospitality), fall into the subsequent juz'. Even in this partial appearance, however, the episode has generated substantial classical and later discussion concerning the identity of Khidr — al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir both record a hadith-based dispute over whether he was himself a prophet or merely a righteous non-prophet ('abd salih) — a question bearing directly on how to reconcile his apparently law-violating actions with revealed law generally. The prevailing resolution among commentators holds that Khidr acted upon direct, unmediated divine knowledge (ilm ladunni) not available to Moses, whose epistemology remained bound to revealed shari'a; the episode is consequently read, especially in later Sufi literature, as a paradigmatic meditation on the relationship between exoteric (zahir) legal knowledge and esoteric (batin) divine wisdom, though this dichotomy should be understood as a later interpretive elaboration rather than terminology present in the Qur'anic text itself.

It is worth noting, in line with ongoing comparative scholarship, that the broader genre of al-Kahf — frame narratives embedding didactic parables and testing-episodes — has drawn scholarly interest for its resemblance to wisdom-literature and testing-narrative traditions found more widely in late antique Near Eastern religious writing; this remains a matter of scholarly discussion rather than settled consensus and is offered here descriptively rather than as an argument about literary dependence.

Read as a whole, this juz' moves between two poles that turn out to be closely related: the limits of human knowledge and the proper conduct that follows from recognizing those limits. Al-Isra begins with a journey that exceeds ordinary human experience and closes with a declaration that "mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little"; its ethical core translates monotheistic conviction directly into obligations toward parents,

kin, orphans, and the vulnerable, refusing any sharp separation between doctrine and practice. Al-Kahf, in its first two-thirds, dramatizes the same concern through narrative rather than legislation: the sleepers' own confusion about how long they slept, the disbelieving gardener's false confidence in permanence, and Moses' inability to comprehend Khidr's actions without their explanation all model a single recurring lesson — that certainty is properly qualified by "if God wills," that apparent misfortune or apparent success may conceal a wisdom not immediately visible, and that even a prophet may need reminding of the boundaries of his own knowledge. The juz' thus offers, across its very different genres of legal address, cosmic narrative, and dialogic parable, a sustained meditation on the proper humility owed by human beings — Prophet and community alike — before a knowledge that remains, in the Qur'an's own words, God's alone to dispose.

Juz’ 16: Surah al-Kahf 18:75 — Surah Ta-Ha 20:135

Surah al-Kahf 18:75 through Surah Ta-Ha 20:135

Overview

This juz’ opens in the closing third of Surah al-Kahf, moves through the whole of Surah Maryam, and closes with the entirety of Surah Ta-Ha — three compositions that Western literary-critical scholarship (Nöldeke-Schwally, refined by Neuwirth and Sinai) situates in the Middle Meccan period, a phase characterized by extended prophetic narrative cycles and heightened eschatological address, in contrast to the terser oracular units associated with the earliest suras. Thematically the juz’ is bound together by the motif of hidden knowledge and divine pedagogy: Musa's humbling before al-Khidr, the mystery of Dhu'l-Qarnayn's power, the miraculous births of Yahya and Jesus, and Musa's commissioning at the burning bush all turn on the encounter between limited human understanding and a sovereign divine will that discloses itself only partially and on its own terms.

The conclusion of the Musa-Khidr narrative (al-Kahf 18:75-82)

The juz' begins mid-episode, with the third and final of the righteous servant's apparently transgressive acts — the repair of a decaying wall in a town whose inhabitants had refused the travelers hospitality. Having already witnessed the damaging of a boat and the killing of a young boy, and having broken his agreed condition of silence each time, Musa is finally separated from his companion, who nonetheless first discloses the meaning behind all three acts. The boat, Khidr explains, belonged to poor men working the sea; it was deliberately damaged so that a rapacious king seizing every serviceable vessel by force would pass it over. The boy, whose parents were believers, was killed because God had foreknown that he would grow into a source of tyranny and ingratitude, and God intended to replace him with a purer and more compassionate child. The wall protected a treasure belonging to two orphans, placed there by a righteous father, and it was preserved "as a mercy from your Lord" until the orphans should reach maturity and retrieve it themselves. The passage closes on a formula of striking theological economy:

"That is the interpretation of that about which you could not have patience" (18:82, in substance).

Ibn Kathir anchors the identification of this narrative's Musa in the hadith transmitted in both Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, via Sa'id ibn Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbas, ultimately from Ubayy ibn Ka'b: the Prophet narrates that Musa was once asked who the most learned person on earth was, replied "I am," and was corrected by God, who directed him toward a servant at the junction of the two seas possessing knowledge Musa did not have. Ibn Kathir notes this hadith settles a question that had occasioned some difference of opinion — namely whether the Musa of this pericope was Musa ibn 'Imran, the lawgiver-prophet of the Exodus narrative, or another figure of the same name — in favor of the former identification. Al-Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan surveys the same question along with variant reports on the identity and rank of the righteous servant, traditionally called al-Khidr (a name popularly linked to greenery springing up around him), noting disagreement among the earliest authorities over whether he was a prophet or simply a righteous servant of God (wali) granted a special measure of knowledge ('ilm laduni), while cautioning that some transmitted details about him rest on weak chains. The episode's enduring exegetical significance, as Ibn Kathir stresses, lies in its didactic function: even a prophet as eminent as Musa does not possess comprehensive knowledge, and apparent evil or hardship in the world may conceal a hidden wisdom disclosed only retrospectively, if at all. Later reception history — readings associated with Fazlur Rahman and with Sufi and philosophical exegesis more broadly — has taken this pericope as a textual anchor for reflecting on the distinction between discursive, legally-oriented knowledge (of which Musa is the very type, as lawgiver) and a directly granted, experiential knowledge exceeding it, though this theme is considerably more prominent in later reception than in the earliest layers of the tafsir tradition.

Dhu'l-Qarnayn and the barrier against Gog and Magog (al-Kahf 18:83-101)

The surah then turns to a third narrative frame, introduced by a question: "They ask you about Dhu'l-Qarnayn." The figure described — "the Two-Horned One" — is a powerful ruler to whom God had granted means (asbab)

enabling him to traverse the earth. He journeys first to the place where the sun sets, encountering a people among whom he exercises judgment, punishing wrongdoers and rewarding the righteous; he then journeys to the place where the sun rises, upon an unsheltered people; and finally he comes to a mountain pass where he meets a people who can scarcely understand speech, and who beg him for protection against the destructive incursions of Gog and Magog (Ya'juj wa Ma'juj). Dhu'l-Qarnayn constructs for them a rampart of iron blocks fused with molten copper, sealing the pass. Crucially, he attributes the achievement not to his own power but to God:

"[Dhu'l-Qarnayn] said, 'This is a mercy from my Lord; but when the promise of my Lord comes, He will make it level, and ever is the promise of my Lord true'" (18:98).

The passage then pivots directly to the Day of Resurrection, describing the trumpet-blast, the gathering of the disbelievers "blue-eyed" with terror, and the futility of works performed by those who denied their Lord's meeting (18:103-105).

Classical sources link this narrative to a specific occasion: al-Wahidi's Asbab al-Nuzul and later commentators such as Ibn Kathir report that the Quraysh, reportedly on the advice of Jewish scholars in Medina, dispatched a delegation — variously named, including al-Nadr ibn al-Harith and 'Uqba ibn Abi Mu'ayt — to test Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophetic claims with three questions: about the Companions of the Cave, about Dhu'l-Qarnayn, and about the spirit (al-ruh, answered separately at 17:85). The revelation of both the Cave narrative (preceding this juz') and the Dhu'l-Qarnayn pericope is traditionally tied to this test, though the report carries variant details across sources and is best read as a well-attested but not uniformly transmitted tradition. Al-Qurtubi's al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an draws juristic and political reflection from the narrative, discussing the legitimacy of defensive fortification under just rule, and surveys the considerable classical disagreement over Dhu'l-Qarnayn's historical identity — most commonly described simply as a righteous king or conqueror, with later, more speculative identifications proposed with figures such as Alexander the Great, Cyrus, or a pre-Islamic Himyarite king of Yemen, none commanding consensus. Western scholarship on the Qur'an's late antique context —

notably essays gathered in the Neuwirth/Sinai/Marx volume *The Qur'an in Context* — has examined the narrative's affinities with the Syriac Alexander Legend and other late antique legendary material concerning a world-conquering king who builds a barrier against apocalyptic nations, situating both the Cave narrative's affinities with the Christian legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus and the Dhu'l-Qarnayn account within a shared late antique Near Eastern narrative matrix, while differing among themselves on how directly the Qur'anic telling engages specific antecedent texts as opposed to drawing more diffusely on common oral tradition.

The closing verses of al-Kahf (18:102-110)

The surah's final movement warns against those who take disbelievers and devils as protectors "instead of Me" and describes those whose efforts in worldly life were misdirected, believing themselves to be acting well while their deeds come to nothing (18:103-104) — widely read as addressing false confidence in religious or moral self-sufficiency divorced from true faith. The surah then rises to one of the Qur'an's most striking declarations of divine transcendence:

"Say, 'If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement'" (18:109).

This verse functions rhetorically as a corrective to any presumption — such as that embedded in the preceding test-narratives about Dhu'l-Qarnayn or the Companions of the Cave — that divine knowledge could be exhausted by report or catalogued in full. The surah then closes with a verse of programmatic importance for the whole of the Qur'an's Christology and theology proper, and functions as something of a summary statement of the entire chapter's concerns with hidden knowledge, human limitation, and rightly-ordered devotion:

"Say, 'I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God. So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord — let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone'" (18:110).

Surah Maryam: the Zachariah, Yahya, and Mary/Jesus narratives (19:1-33)

Surah Maryam opens with the account of Zachariah's private supplication for an heir, offered "in secret," despite his advanced age and his wife's barrenness, and God's answer in the birth of Yahya (John), given a name Zachariah is told no one has borne before him. As a confirming sign, Zachariah is rendered unable to speak to people for three days despite being physically sound (19:10). The narrative then turns, with marked rhetorical and dramatic intensification (noted by al-Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf for its shifts of address and heightened dialogic tension), to Mary:

"And mention, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], in the Book, [the story of] Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east. And she took, in seclusion from them, a screen. Then We sent to her Our Angel [Gabriel], and he represented himself to her as a well-proportioned man" (19:16-17).

The angel announces to her a "pure boy," and Mary's astonished reply — that no man has touched her — is answered with the declaration that the matter is easy for her Lord, who intends the child as a sign to humankind and a mercy. The narrative moves through her conception, withdrawal, and the pains of labor driving her to a palm tree, where she is comforted and provided for, and culminates in her return to her people bearing the child, met with accusation, whereupon the infant Jesus speaks from the cradle in his own defense:

"[Jesus] said, 'Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet'" (19:30).

This declaration — that Jesus identifies himself first and foremost as God's servant ('abd Allah) — functions as the surah's Christological keystone, establishing servanthood and prophethood rather than sonship as Jesus's own self-description, in a passage classical exegetes read as programmatically anticipatory of the polemic that follows later in the surah. The episode has a well-documented connection to early Islamic history: sira sources (Ibn Ishaq, via Ibn Hisham) report that Ja'far ibn Abi Talib recited from this very passage before the Negus of Abyssinia (al-Najashi) and his

bishops during the first hijra, and that the recitation moved the Negus to grant protection to the Muslim emigrants — a report widely transmitted in seerah literature, though it describes the reception of an already-revealed passage rather than the circumstances of its original revelation.

Abraham, other prophets, and the debate over resurrection (19:41-76)

The surah continues with Abraham's respectful yet uncompromising confrontation with his father over idol-worship — addressing him as "O my father" even while rejecting his practice, a passage often noted for its combination of filial tenderness and doctrinal firmness — followed by brief commemorations of other prophetic figures, including Ishmael and Idris, each described as recipients of God's particular favor and elevation, and by an account of later generations who "inherited the Scripture" only to neglect prayer and follow their desires (19:59), set against the promise of gardens for those who repent and believe. The surah then addresses skeptics who deny bodily resurrection, mockingly asking whether, once dead, they will truly be brought forth alive (19:66), which the Qur'an answers by pointing back to the fact of an initial creation from nothing (19:67) and by affirming, in verses of considerable homiletic force, that "there is none of you except he will come to it" — the path over Hell traversed by all — after which God will deliver the God-fearing and leave the wrongdoers "within it, on their knees" (19:71-72). Classical commentators read this "crossing" (al-wurud) variously, some understanding it as a literal traversal of a bridge over Hell and others as a more general approach or nearness to it from which the righteous are spared; Ibn Kathir surveys both readings without adjudicating decisively between them.

The polemic against divine sonship (19:88-98)

The theological argument of the surah reaches its most concentrated statement earlier, at 19:35, and its most rhetorically charged expression toward the surah's close:

"It is not [befitting] for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When He decrees an affair, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is" (19:35).

This verse grounds the rejection of the claim of divine sonship not merely in scriptural assertion but in an argument from God's mode of causation: a God who creates by sheer command has no need of begetting in any creaturely sense. The polemic intensifies further at 19:88-95:

"And they say, 'The Most Merciful has taken [for Himself] a son.' You have done an atrocious thing" (19:88-89).

Ibn Kathir treats this passage as one of the Qur'an's direct refutations of the doctrine of Jesus's divine sonship, reading it alongside other Qur'anic Christological texts as part of a coherent scriptural argument. He further notes the striking rhetorical intensity of the verses describing the heavens as almost rent asunder and the earth split and the mountains falling in ruin at the utterance of this claim (19:90-91), observing that classical commentators are not unanimous in reading this as literal cosmic description; many understand it instead as hyperbole (isti'ara) conveying the theological gravity of the claim, though some traditionist commentators are reported to lean toward a more literal reading. The passage closes with assurance that the believing righteous will be granted love (wudd) from the Merciful, and warning to a "hostile people" who reject the message, before the surah's final verses affirm that the Qur'an has been made easy in the Prophet's own tongue so that he might give good tidings to the righteous and warning to a contentious people, and note the utter disappearance, without trace, of many earlier generations who once seemed so secure in the land (19:96-98).

Surah Ta-Ha: opening consolation (20:1-16)

Ta-Ha opens with its enigmatic disjointed letters and an immediate word of reassurance:

"Ta, Ha. We have not sent down to you the Qur'an that you be distressed" (20:1-2).

Classical commentators, cited in Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi, transmit a report — not attached to a single strong chain of transmission, and best treated as interpretive tradition rather than an established occasion of revelation — that the Quraysh had mocked the Prophet's extended nightly devotions as an excessive self-affliction, prompting this opening address. This contextual

reading finds some resonance with a hadith reported in Sahih Muslim describing the Prophet's practice of praying through the night until his feet would swell; several commentators link the two, though as a matter of thematic resonance rather than a certain historical link. The surah continues by affirming the Qur'an as a reminder for one who fears God, sent down from the Creator of the heavens and the highest heavens, before turning directly to Musa's story, introduced by the divine question, "And has the story of Musa reached you?" (20:9). What follows is the theophany at the burning bush, Musa's removal of his sandals in the sacred valley of Tuwa, and the foundational declaration of divine oneness and the commission to prayer:

"Indeed, I am your Lord, so remove your sandals. Indeed, you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa... Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance" (20:12-14).

Musa's commissioning and the confrontation with Pharaoh (20:17-76)

The staff is transformed into a serpent and Musa's hand emerges luminous "without disease," as confirming signs of his mission; Musa, in a moment of very human hesitation before the enormity of his task, prays for divine assistance in terms that classical and modern readers alike single out for their psychological directness:

"[Moses] said, 'My Lord, expand for me my breast [with assurance] and ease for me my task and untie the knot from my tongue that they may understand my speech'" (20:25-28).

He further requests that his brother Harun (Aaron) be appointed as a helper and support in the mission, a request granted. The narrative then follows the brothers to Pharaoh, whose interrogation of Musa about "the generations of old" (20:51) is met with an answer deferring such knowledge to God alone, before the confrontation culminates in the contest with Pharaoh's magicians. Notably, the account emphasizes the eventual submission of the magicians to God despite Pharaoh's threats of mutilation and crucifixion — read by commentators as itself a sign of the truth's power to overturn worldly authority even among those most skilled in illusion. Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, and al-Qurtubi together note that this is the Qur'an's fullest single recounting of

Musa's commissioning, expanding considerably on the terser references found elsewhere in the Qur'an; Western literary-critical scholarship (Sinai and others) has observed that this expansiveness, relative to earlier and shorter Meccan treatments of Musa, is itself evidence of a diachronic shift toward longer, more didactically elaborated narrative composition in the Middle Meccan phase — a shift compatible with, but analytically distinct from, the traditional Meccan/Medinan classification of suras.

The Exodus and the episode of al-Samiri (20:77-98)

The narrative proceeds through the crossing of the sea and Pharaoh's drowning, followed by Musa's ascent to receive the tablets, during which his people, left in Harun's charge, are led into the worship of a golden calf fashioned by a figure identified as al-Samiri. On his return, Musa confronts both Harun, who protests his inability to restrain the people, and al-Samiri directly, who recounts his own act — famously described as having "grasped a handful [of dust] from the track of the messenger" and cast it into the calf (20:96) — and receives a punishment of exile and a curse to be pronounced upon him. Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, and al-Qurtubi note that the al-Samiri episode has no counterpart in the biblical account of the golden calf, and discuss various traditional reports on his identity — described variously as a Samaritan or as a man from a tribe called al-Samira — while flagging that some of the identifying detail found in the exegetical tradition rests on reports of the Isra'iliyyat type whose reliability is not uniformly vouched for by the critical hadith tradition.

Eschatological exhortation, Adam and Iblis, and the closing consolation (20:99-135)

The surah turns to warning of the Day of Judgment and the blindness of those who turned away from remembrance of their Lord, affirms the Arabic revelation of the Qur'an, and cautions the Prophet against haste in receiving it before its completion. It then recounts, as a cautionary parallel to the preceding Musa-Pharaoh narrative, the account of Adam's covenant, his forgetfulness, and Iblis's refusal to prostrate before him, followed by Adam's fall through Iblis's temptation and his subsequent repentance and divine forgiveness (20:115-123) — a narrative Ibn 'Ashur, in his al-Tahrir wa'l-

Tanwir, reads as thematically integrated into the surah's overall rhetorical purpose (maqasid) rather than as a miscellaneous addition, namely the strengthening of the Prophet and the early Meccan community through demonstrations of both divine mercy toward human weakness and the enduring enmity of a rebellious adversary. The surah closes with direct counsel to the Prophet:

"And enjoin prayer upon your family [and people] and be steadfast therein. We ask you not for provision; We provide for you, and the [best] outcome is for righteousness" (20:132),

alongside instruction not to envy the transient enjoyments granted to disbelievers, and a final call to await the outcome with patience. This closing sequence of consolation, Ibn 'Ashur argues, unifies the surah's opening address, its extended Moses-Pharaoh narrative, and its closing exhortations around a single rhetorical purpose: sustaining the Prophet and his followers amid the pressures of Meccan persecution.

A further, well-known seerah episode is transmitted in connection with this surah, though again with variant detail across sources and not to be treated as a single ironclad historical report: the account of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab's conversion, in which 'Umar, en route to harm the Prophet, is diverted by news that his sister Fatima bint al-Khattab and her husband had embraced Islam, and upon confronting them and subsequently reading a written portion of Surah Ta-Ha in their possession, is moved to declare his acceptance of Islam before the Prophet. This episode, widely transmitted in sira compilations such as those of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, functions as testimony to the surah's reputed rhetorical and emotional force in the early Meccan mission rather than as an occasion of the surah's revelation.

Synthesis

Read as a unit, this juz' moves through three interlocking registers of a single overarching concern: the disproportion between human knowledge and divine wisdom, and the proper human response to that disproportion. The Musa-Khidr narrative dramatizes the limits of even prophetic understanding when confronted with providence's hidden workings; the Dhu'l-Qarnayn narrative extends this into the political sphere, presenting rightly-exercised

power as power that attributes its own success to mercy rather than merit; the Maryam narratives ground miraculous births and prophetic vocation in God's uncaused command ("Be, and it is"), against which any notion of literal divine begetting is judged both theologically incoherent and rhetorically monstrous, while the surah's closing verses on resurrection insist that no soul, however secure it feels in this life, escapes the reckoning that all must eventually face; and the Ta-Ha narrative offers the fullest Qur'anic portrait of a reluctant prophet strengthened, commissioned, and consoled despite his own hesitations, his people's lapses, and his adversary's obstinacy. The juz's closing verses, addressed directly to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him through the consolation of Ta-Ha, complete a movement that began with a delegation's skeptical questions at the end of al-Kahf: from the demonstration that no delegation's test can exhaust the words of God, through the miraculous and much-contested births recounted in Maryam, to the reassurance, at Ta-Ha's close, that patience, prayer, and reliance on divine provision — rather than any anxious rivalry with the transient fortunes of unbelievers — constitute the substance of the righteous outcome.

Juz’ 17: Surah al-Anbiya 21:1 — Surah al-Hajj 22:78

Surah al-Anbiya 21:1 through Surah al-Hajj 22:78

Juz’ 17 opens the twenty-first chapter of the Qur’an, Surat al-Anbiya’ (“The Prophets”), and continues through the entirety of Surat al-Hajj (“The Pilgrimage”). Together the two surahs form a deliberate pairing: al-Anbiya’ compresses the biographies of some sixteen prophetic figures into a rapid anthology illustrating the singularity of the prophetic message across history, while al-Hajj shifts register between eschatological warning, embryological and cosmological argument, ritual legislation for the pilgrimage, and — in one of the juz’s most historically significant passages — the first Qur’anic sanction of armed self-defense. Both surahs are widely regarded, by classical and modern scholarship alike, as products of the late Meccan period, with al-Hajj carrying an admixture of Medinan material, making this juz’ unusually rich for observing the transition in the Qur’an’s rhetorical and legal register.

Al-Anbiya’ 1–50: Heedlessness and the defense of prophecy

The surah opens abruptly: "Their reckoning has approached for the people, while they are in heedlessness turning away" (21:1). The following verses catalogue the range of dismissive responses the Meccan audience offered the Qur’an — that its revelation is merely "confused dreams," that Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him "fabricated it," that he is "a poet" (21:5) — and the text rebuts each in turn, insisting that if the disbelievers truly doubted, they should "bring a sign like what was sent to the former [prophets]" (21:5). A pivotal apologetic move follows in 21:7-8: "And We sent not before you except men to whom We revealed... And We did not make them forms not eating food, nor were they immortal." This insistence on prophetic humanity — that messengers ate, and did not live forever — was a recurring point in Meccan-period polemics defending Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him against expectations that a true messenger should be an angelic or superhuman figure, and classical exegetes consistently read it as directly answering objections raised by the Quraysh.

The section's theological center of gravity is 21:22: "Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe."

This is the Qur’an’s classic dalil al-tamanu’, the "proof from mutual exclusion" or "hindrance," and it receives sustained attention across the tafsir tradition. Al-Tabari, in Jami’ al-Bayan, treats the conditional clause (law kana fihima alihatun illa Allah la-fasadata) as a strict logical argument: were there two or more independent, competing sovereign wills governing the cosmos, their potential for conflicting decrees would necessarily produce disorder or ruin (fasad) in the ordered cosmos we observe; since no such disorder is observed, no such plurality of gods exists. Az-Zamakhshari and Ibn Kathir transmit similar lines of reasoning, situating the verse as a rational-theological (kalami) argument for tawhid rather than a merely rhetorical flourish, and it has remained a touchstone in later Islamic theological literature on divine unity.

Shortly after, 21:30 offers a striking cosmogonic image: "Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?" Classical exegetes generally understood "joined entity" (ratq) to mean that the heavens and earth had originally existed as a single connected mass before God effected their "separation" (fatq), and read "every living thing from water" as indicating the material substrate from which life derives. This verse has attracted considerable attention in modern apologetic and comparative-religious literature for its perceived resonance with big-bang cosmology and with the biological centrality of water to life, though academically-minded readers note that such correspondences are retrospective and that the verse's primary exegetical context is a rhetorical argument for God's power to resurrect and re-order creation, addressed to an audience already familiar with cosmogonic mythologies of a primordial undifferentiated mass.

The prologue closes with a terse, oft-quoted statement on mortality: "Every soul will taste death. And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned" (21:35). Its brevity and universality have made it a staple of Islamic ethical and eschatological literature, cited independently of its narrative context as a reminder that both adversity and prosperity function as forms of divine trial (bala’).

Al-Anbiya’ 48–91: The anthology of prophets

This long central passage compresses an extraordinary number of prophetic narratives into a relatively small compass, a structural feature that scholars of Qur’anic form — including approaches associated with Angelika Neuwirth's form-critical work — identify as typical of later Meccan surahs, which tend to allude briefly to shared prophetic lore on the assumption that the audience is already conversant with it, rather than narrating a story at length (as, by contrast, Surat Yusuf does).

The sequence begins with Musa and Harun, given al-furqan, "the criterion" (21:48), then turns at greater length to Ibrahim. His confrontation with his father and people over their idols — "What are these statues to which you are devoted?" (21:52) — culminates in his smashing the idols and being cast into a fire, from which God delivers him with the command: "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Ibrahim" (21:69). Ibn Kathir's treatment of this episode collects a range of reports, some overlapping with Judeo-Christian and rabbinic traditions concerning Ibrahim's confrontation with Nimrod, but he explicitly flags many of these details as isra’iliyyat — material absorbed from Jewish and Christian lore — urging caution about their reliability even as he records them, a characteristic feature of his exegetical method whenever qisas al-anbiya’ (prophetic story-narratives) overlap with older Near Eastern traditions.

The anthology proceeds swiftly: Lut and the deliverance from the overturned cities; Nuh and his rescue from the flood, "and We saved him and his family from the great affliction" (21:76); Dawud and Sulayman, including the brief legal vignette of the two litigants whose case concerned a field ruined by grazing sheep, a matter on which "We gave understanding of the case to Sulayman" while both were granted "judgment and knowledge" (21:78-79), and Sulayman's dominion over the wind and the jinn who dive [in servitude] for him (21:81-82). Ayyub (Job) appears with his affliction and restoration: "Indeed, adversity has touched me, and you are the most merciful of the merciful" (21:83), a supplication that, like Yunus's below, has entered devotional usage as a model of patient supplication under suffering. Isma’il, Idris, and Dhu’l-Kifl are each briefly noted for patience (21:85), before the passage turns to Dhu’l-Nun — Yunus, "the one of the fish" — swallowed by the fish after departing "in anger," and calling out from the darkness: "There

is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers" (21:87). The following verse states the response: "So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers" (21:88). This supplication carries a documented afterlife in Islamic devotional practice: a hadith transmitted in Sunan al-Tirmidhi, and cited by later authorities including al-Nawawi and Ibn Kathir, reports the Prophet stating that this du'a of Dhu'l-Nun is never invoked by a distressed believer without God answering him — a tradition that has made 21:87 one of the most practically employed verses of supplication in the Qur’an, independent of its narrative setting.

The sequence closes with Zakariyya’s prayer for offspring despite old age and barrenness — "My Lord, do not leave me alone [with no heir]" (21:89) — answered with the birth of Yahya, and finally Maryam, "who guarded her chastity, so We blew into her [garment] through Our angel/spirit, and We made her and her son a sign for the worlds" (21:91). Notably, this treatment of Maryam and Isa is allusive rather than narrative, assuming the audience's familiarity with the fuller account given elsewhere (Surah Maryam, Surah Al Imran), consistent with the anthology's generally compressed style.

Al-Anbiya’ 92–112: Unity of religion and eschatological close

The surah pivots to a declaration of religious unity across the prophetic line: "Indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me" (21:92), followed by a lament that "they divided their religion among themselves" into competing factions (21:93) — a statement exegetes read as addressing the fragmentation of the Abrahamic religious community into rival sects, notwithstanding the singularity of the message each prophet delivered.

Eschatological material follows: the release of Ya’juj wa-Ma’juj (Gog and Magog) as a sign of the Hour's nearness — "until when [the dam of] Gog and Magog has been opened and they, from every elevation, descend" (21:96) — and a striking image of cosmic dissolution, "the Day when We will fold the heaven like the folding of a [written] scroll" (21:104). Immediately preceding this, 21:105 makes an explicit intertextual claim: "And We have already written in the book [i.e., the Zabur] after the [previous] mention that the land

is inherited by My righteous servants." Both Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi identify this as an echo of Psalm 37:29 ("The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever"), treating it as evidence of scriptural continuity between the Zabur (Psalms) given to Dawud and the Qur'an's own message — an instance the tradition cites to argue that the Qur'an consciously situates itself within, rather than apart from, the earlier scriptural corpus.

The surah's climactic statement of purpose comes at 21:107: "And We have not sent you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], except as a mercy to the worlds" (rahmatan lil-'alamin). This is among the most frequently cited verses in the entire Qur'an regarding the nature and scope of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's mission. Ibn Kathir and, in the modern period, Ibn 'Ashur both give it extended attention, generally concurring that "the worlds" (al-'alamin) encompasses believers and unbelievers alike — the mercy consisting in the offer of guidance, the postponement of immediate punishment, and the general benefit to human and, in some readings, cosmic order that the prophetic mission represents — rather than being restricted to those who accept the message. The surah closes with a modest statement of the Prophet's actual commission: he is merely to say, "It is revealed to me that your god is but one God," and to deliver "notice ... equally," leaving final judgment to God (21:108-112).

Al-Hajj 1–24: The terror of the Hour and the proof from embryology

Surat al-Hajj opens with some of the Qur'an's most vivid eschatological imagery: "O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the convulsion of the [final] Hour is a terrible thing. On the Day you see it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of Allah is severe" (22:1-2). Exegetes have long remarked on the almost cinematic quality of this description — its collapse of ordinary maternal instinct and its imagery of a terror so overwhelming that people appear drunk without having drunk anything. Some later traditions, transmitted for instance via al-Wahidi-style asbab material, associate the passage with a particular night-time occasion during the Prophet's travels, though such circumstantial detail is secondary

to the verses' clear rhetorical function of establishing the Hour's magnitude at the very outset of the surah.

The surah then turns to those who "dispute about Allah without knowledge" and follow "every rebellious devil" (22:3), introducing a recurring polemical target across the chapter: people who argue about matters of ultimate reality without grounding, contrasted later (22:8) with a nearly identical description of stubborn disputation. Between these frames comes the surah's most closely studied single verse, 22:5, the embryological passage: "O people, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed, that We may show you..." This verse has drawn word-by-word attention across both the classical and modern tafsir traditions. Classically, it functions as an argument by analogy: just as God brings a human being through discrete, observable stages of development from inert matter to living, formed being, so too can He restore life to what is dead at the Resurrection — the embryological process serving as an empirical demonstration of divine power already witnessed by every human being's own coming-into-existence. In the modern period, this verse has additionally attracted a distinct strand of apologetic literature, associated loosely with mid-to-late-twentieth-century "scientific miracles" discourse (including work popularly linked to the Canadian anatomist Keith Moore), asserting detailed correspondence between the verse's staged terminology and modern embryological staging. More critical academic treatments situate the passage instead within a broader Qur’anic and wider Near Eastern rhetorical topos — the argument from embryonic development to bodily resurrection — cautioning against retrojecting modern scientific taxonomy onto language whose primary function in context is theological and rhetorical rather than technical.

The section proceeds to a stark contrast in eschatological reward and punishment: the disbelievers, in 22:19-22, are described in one of the Qur’an's most graphic depictions of hellfire — "garments of fire will be cut for them... poured over their heads will be scalding water" — while 22:23 describes believers "admitted to gardens beneath which rivers flow, adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearl." A reported occasion of revelation,

transmitted across several tafsir sources, connects 22:19-22 (the "two disputing groups," al-khasmani) to an armed confrontation — some traditions specifically identifying it with single combat following the Battle of Badr between Hamzah, ‘Ali, and ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Harith on one side and ‘Utbah, Shaybah, and al-Walid ibn ‘Utbah on the other. This identification is transmitted with some frequency, but it raises a chronological puzzle: if the verse is part of an otherwise Meccan or early eschatological core, associating its occasion with a post-Badr Medinan event is not straightforward, and commentators differ on how to reconcile it, some treating the verse as a later Medinan insertion into an earlier Meccan discourse — consistent with the broader scholarly recognition of al-Hajj as a "mixed" surah.

Embedded within this section is 22:11, a compact but pointed verse on conditional faith: "And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to disbelief], losing this world and the Hereafter. That is the manifest loss." Reports transmitted with chains traced to Ibn ‘Abbas, and recorded in works such as al-Wahidi's Asbab al-Nuzul, associate this verse with Bedouin or peripheral converts to Islam whose commitment was transactional — contingent on whether conversion brought them health, wealth, or offspring, and abandoned if it instead brought misfortune. Whatever its precise historical referent, the verse has functioned across the tradition as a general critique of instrumentalized religiosity, faith held only so long as it proves materially convenient.

The remaining verses of this section (22:12-18) extend the same contrast: the futility of invoking, alongside God, "that which neither harms nor benefits" (22:12-13), and a cosmic hymn-like enumeration of creation's involuntary submission to God — "Do you not see that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth... and many of the people" (22:18) — a verse the exegetical tradition typically reads as distinguishing the compelled prostration of the natural order from the voluntary, morally significant submission asked of human beings.

Al-Hajj 25–37: The sanctity of the Ka‘bah and the rites of pilgrimage

This passage marks the surah's shift toward ritual-legal material, a density unusual for what is otherwise counted among Meccan or mixed-period chapters. It opens by establishing the sanctity of "al-Masjid al-Haram, which We have made equal for the people, the resident therein and the visitor" (22:25), and recalls Ibrahim's foundational role: "And [mention] when We designated for Ibrahim the site of the House, [saying], 'Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those who perform tawaf and those who stand [in prayer] and those who bow and prostrate'" (22:26). The famous call to pilgrimage follows: "And proclaim to the people the Hajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every distant pass" (22:27) — a verse traditionally understood as Ibrahim's own summons, echoed by God, inaugurating the pilgrimage rite as a standing institution.

Subsequent verses detail elements of the rites — the sacrificial animals (al-hady, 22:28, 22:34-37), circumambulation of "the ancient House" (al-bayt al-ʻatiq, 22:29, 22:33), and the vows and offerings associated with pilgrimage. Al-Qurtubi's tafsir devotes substantial juristic (fiqhi) attention to this stretch, given the surah's unusual concentration of ritual-legal detail; he catalogues differences among jurists on questions such as the qualifying conditions for sacrificial animals and the precise sense of "the ancient/free house." The passage's best-known single verse, however, is 22:37: "Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety (taqwa) from you." This has been consistently read, by classical and modern commentators alike, as a corrective against ritualism emptied of ethical or spiritual intent — the sacrifice is not a transaction with God measured in flesh and blood, but an act whose value lies entirely in the sincerity and reverence (taqwa) of the one who performs it. The Ibrahim material here connects thematically, though not through any single documented occasion, to the Prophet's own later restoration of Abrahamic monotheistic practice in his conduct of the Hajj and his removal of idols from the Kaʻbah following the conquest of Mecca — a broad resonance between text and biography rather than a specific narrated link.

Al-Hajj 38–48: Permission to fight, and reflection on ruined civilizations

Here the surah contains its most historically consequential passage: "Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory" (22:39), followed by "[Those] who have been evicted from their homes without right, only because they say, 'Our Lord is Allah'... And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned" (22:40). Classical exegetes — al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir among them — treat this as widely reported to be the first Qur’anic verse granting the believers permission to take up arms, revealed shortly after the Hijrah to Medina, in response to the years of persecution the early Muslim community endured without retaliation in Mecca. This is among the more securely attested seerah linkages in the entire juz’: the causal clause, "because they were wronged," ties the permission explicitly to prior injury rather than granting unconditional license, and the historical circumstance of pre-Hijrah persecution followed by post-Hijrah vulnerability to further attack is well documented across the sira tradition, even if the precise dating of the verse relative to other early Medinan material cannot be fixed with certainty. Modern reform-oriented scholarship — Fazlur Rahman is a notable example — has emphasized this causal clause as paradigmatic for a Qur’anic ethics of defensive rather than offensive warfare, arguing that the verse's own stated rationale (wronged, evicted, solely for professing monotheism) should anchor any normative extrapolation from it, in contrast to polemical readings that isolate "permission to fight" from its explicit conditioning clause. The reference to "monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques" being preserved through this same divine "checking" of one group by another has also been read by some commentators as an argument for the protection of multiple religious communities' places of worship, not solely Muslim ones — an early articulation, on this reading, of a principle of interfaith sanctuary bound up with the justification for armed resistance to aggression.

The following verses (22:41-48) turn from justification to consequence and historical reflection. 22:41 describes the believers who, if firmly established, "establish prayer and give zakah and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong" — a verse frequently cited as outlining the constructive, governance-

oriented purpose for which armed defense is permitted, rather than treating fighting as an end in itself. The passage then widens into a survey of earlier peoples who rejected their messengers — the peoples of Nuh, ‘Ad, Thamud, Ibrahim, and the people of Madyan, alongside Musa (22:42-44) — reassuring the Prophet that rejection of his message stands within a long precedent. This culminates in the historical meditation: "And how many a city did We destroy while it was committing wrong, so it is [now] fallen into ruin" (22:45), and the arresting image of "an empty well and a lofty palace" (22:45) as emblems of vanished power. The section closes with reflections on divine patience with wrongdoing communities — "a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of those which you count" (22:47) — and a reminder of the Prophet's role as a plain warner, "and how many a city did I give respite while it was committing wrong" (22:48), situating the permission to fight within a larger providential framework in which ultimate judgment, not immediate retribution, governs the fate of nations.

Al-Hajj 49–51: The Prophet's charge as warner

A brief transitional passage restates the Prophet's basic office in plain terms: "Say, 'O people, I am only to you a clear warner'" (22:49), followed by the paired formula of reward and consequence — forgiveness and generous provision for those who believe and do righteous deeds (22:50), against companionship in the Fire for those who strive to discredit God's signs (22:51). Brief as it is, this passage functions as a hinge, closing the historical-admonitory material of the preceding section and preparing the ground for the surah's most theologically contested verse that immediately follows.

Al-Hajj 52–78: Prophetic constancy, the disputed verse on Satan's interference, and the closing exhortation

The chapter's most contested single verse follows: "And We did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that when he spoke [or recited], Satan threw into it [some intrusion]. But Allah abolishes that which Satan throws in; then Allah makes precise His verses. And Allah is Knowing and Wise" (22:52). This verse is conventionally linked by later exegetical and historical tradition to the disputed report known as the "Satanic Verses" or gharaniq incident, said to have occurred during a Meccan recitation of Surat

al-Najm, in which Satan is alleged to have inserted words momentarily conceding intercessory power to three pagan Meccan goddesses before the intrusion was corrected by revelation. The historicity of this narrative is heavily contested. It is absent from, or considered unreliable within, the most rigorous hadith collections — Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim do not contain the story in its popularly circulated form — though some early historical and tafsir sources, including material transmitted in connection with al-Tabari's History, record versions of it. Az-Zamakhshari, in al-Kashshaf, offers a theologically cautious reading of "Satan cast into his umniyyah [recitation or wish]," generally construing the phrase in terms of Satan's attempts to plant doubt or false suggestion into the minds of a prophet's audience rather than endorsing a literal insertion of erroneous verses into revealed scripture — a stance broadly representative of the skeptical or reinterpretive posture the major tafsir tradition has taken toward the gharaniq story. In Western academic scholarship, the episode has drawn sustained attention: W. Montgomery Watt considered some version of the story plausible on the grounds of the "criterion of embarrassment" (the reasoning that a story so potentially damaging to prophetic infallibility is unlikely to have been invented by later Muslims), while more skeptical scholars have argued that the narrative's textual transmission is late, internally inconsistent, and likely legendary in its developed form. Virtually all classical and modern Muslim scholars reject the historicity of the gharaniq incident as popularly told, and the matter should be regarded as a genuinely contested crux rather than settled history in either direction.

The surah's closing movement resumes a more conventional register: reassurance that God "will remove that which Satan throws in" (22:52, continued), reflections contrasting believers' and disbelievers' reception of the Qur’an (22:54-57), and promises to those who emigrate for God's sake and are killed or die in that cause, that God "will surely provide for them a good provision" (22:58-60) — language plausibly resonant with the experience of the early Meccan emigrants to Medina and Abyssinia, though the text does not name a specific occasion. Further proofs of divine power drawn from nature follow — rainfall bringing the earth to life, the subjugation of ships to sail the sea, God's control of day and night (22:63-65) — a familiar Qur’anic argumentative pattern linking observable natural phenomena to

divine sovereignty. Intervening verses (22:66-70) return to the themes of the surah's opening, affirming God's giving and taking of life and His comprehensive knowledge of "what is in the heaven and earth," before the chapter renews its warning against those who "dispute concerning Allah without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening Book" (22:71-72), and offers, at 22:73, one of the Qur’an's memorable rhetorical images against idolatry: "those you call upon besides Allah will never create [as much as] a fly, even if they gathered together for it" — a deliberately modest example (a fly, rather than some grander creation) chosen, exegetes note, to underscore the absolute impotence of the objects of Meccan worship even in the most trivial instance. The surah then commands, "O you who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord" (22:77).

The surah's final verse, 22:78, functions as a summary exhortation and a naming of the community: "And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father Ibrahim. He named you 'Muslims' before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation], that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people." Exegetes read this verse as tracing the community's very name — al-muslimin — back to Ibrahim himself, closing the surah by tying its ritual legislation (the Hajj rites established through Ibrahim earlier in the chapter) and its ethical exhortation together under the single rubric of "the religion of your father Ibrahim," while the phrase "has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty" is frequently cited in later Islamic legal theory as a foundational statement of the principle of ease (yusr) in religious obligation.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, this juz’ moves from a rapid, allusive anthology of prophetic figures — unified by the recurring insistence that all messengers preached one religion, suffered trial, and were vindicated by divine rescue — into a second surah whose register shifts repeatedly between eschatological terror, natural-philosophical argument for resurrection, ritual legislation for pilgrimage, and, at its historical hinge, the first Qur’anic authorization of armed self-defense against persecution. Modern academic scholarship's classification of al-Hajj as a "mixed" surah, combining an early or middle

Meccan eschatological core with Medinan legal and political material, is corroborated by the juz’s own internal texture: the same chapter that opens with cosmic terror and closes with a call to "strive for Allah" also contains, at its center, one of the Qur’an's most consequential and historically anchored legal turning points, and, immediately after it, one of its most genuinely contested exegetical questions in the gharaniq controversy. Threading through both surahs is a consistent emphasis — voiced in the dalil al-tamanu’ of 21:22, the embryological analogy of 22:5, and the ritual-ethical corrective of 22:37 — on grounding belief and practice in reasoned argument and sincere intent rather than in inherited assumption or empty ritual form, even as the juz’ closes by affirming continuity with the oldest strand of that tradition: "the religion of your father Ibrahim."

Juz’ 18: Surah al-Mu’minun 23:1 — Surah al-Furqan 25:20

Surah al-Mu’minun 23:1 through Surah al-Furqan 25:20

The eighteenth juz' of the Qur'anic codex spans the conclusion of Surah al-Mu'minun (The Believers), the whole of Surah an-Nur (Light), and the opening twenty verses of Surah al-Furqan (The Criterion). The three surahs do not share a compositional moment: al-Mu'minun and the opening of al-Furqan belong, by the near-unanimous judgment of the exegetical tradition and of modern academic chronological analysis (work in the tradition of Theodor Nöldeke and, more recently, Angelika Neuwirth), to the Meccan period of confrontation with Quraysh polytheism, while an-Nur is Medinan, addressing the legal and domestic architecture of the emergent community after the Hijra. Their juxtaposition within a single juz' is an artifact of the standard 'Uthmanic codex's arrangement by textual mass rather than a reflection of chronological sequence — a point regularly noted in academic introductions to the text and worth flagging for readers accustomed to treating juz' divisions as compositional units. What unifies the juz' thematically, if not historically, is a recurring concern with the boundary between the sanctioned and the illicit — in ritual conduct, in domestic and sexual ethics, in epistemic claims about revelation — and with the rhetorical work of establishing criteria (furqan) by which believers might discern one from the other.

The close of Surah al-Mu'minun (23:1–118)

Surah al-Mu'minun opens with one of the more frequently anthologized passages in the Meccan corpus, a catalogue of the qualities that mark successful believers: "Certainly will the believers have succeeded: They who are during their prayer humbly submissive" (23:1–2). The verses that follow extend the description — avoidance of vain talk (laghw), payment of zakat, guarding of chastity except within lawful bounds, faithfulness to trusts and covenants, and careful maintenance of prayer — closing the unit with the promise that such believers "are the inheritors who will inherit al-Firdaws" (23:10–11). Classical exegetes, among them al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir, link the opening term khushu' (humble submissiveness in prayer) to hadith reports describing the Prophet's own bodily stillness and demeanor in prayer,

and from this base the juristic tradition developed a discussion — not resolved uniformly across the schools — over whether outward stillness constitutes an obligatory element of valid prayer or merely a recommended disposition. The passage functions structurally as an opening exhortation, a genre common to the "success" (aflaha) formulas that begin several Meccan surahs, and its brevity and moral clarity have made it one of the most quoted units of the surah in later devotional and homiletic literature.

The surah then turns, at 23:12–14, to a much-discussed description of human embryological development: "And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation." Classical commentators such as al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir gloss the successive terms — nutfah (drop), 'alaqah (clinging clot), and mudghah (chewed-like lump) — primarily within the semantic range available to the Arabic vocabulary of the time, situating the passage among the Qur'an's broader rhetoric of creation-as-sign rather than treating it as a technical anatomical treatise. The passage has, however, acquired a distinct afterlife in twentieth-century and contemporary apologetic literature, where its terminology is frequently read as anticipating findings of modern embryology; this reading is a later layer applied atop, rather than continuous with, the classical exegetical tradition, and academic treatments of Qur'anic natural-theology rhetoric generally note the passage's function within an argument-from-design structure common to middle and late Meccan surahs, alongside comparable "sign" passages on rain, plant growth, cattle, and Noah's ark that follow immediately in 23:17–22.

The middle section of the surah (23:23–50) surveys a compressed sequence of earlier prophetic histories — Noah, an unnamed sequence of subsequent messengers, then Moses and Aaron, and finally Jesus and Mary, described briefly as a sign given shelter "to a high ground having level [areas] and flowing water" (23:50). Each episode follows a recognizable pattern: a messenger sent to a people, resistance from an elite that dismisses him as merely human, and eventual divine intervention, whether destruction of the

recalcitrant community or preservation of the believing remnant. This iterative structure, typical of middle-to-late Meccan surahs, functions rhetorically as a warning to the Quraysh audience by analogy rather than as sustained historical narrative; the treatment is compressed relative to the fuller narrative surahs (such as Yusuf or the earlier portions of al-A'raf), consistent with the surah's function as cumulative admonition rather than storytelling for its own sake. The Noah pericope in particular (23:23–30) compresses material narrated at far greater length in Surah Hud and Surah Nuh, a telescoping that commentators such as al-Razi note is characteristic of the surah's rhetorical economy: prior narratives are here assumed as known background rather than freshly introduced.

23:51–77 opens with an address to "the messengers" collectively — "O Messengers, eat from the good foods and work righteousness" (23:51) — before criticizing those who have "cut off their affair [of religion] among themselves into portions, every faction rejoicing in what it has" (23:53), a verse frequently invoked in later theological literature on sectarian division, though the immediate referent in classical exegesis is generally the fragmentation of prior religious communities rather than a specific prediction about later Islamic sectarianism. The passage continues with a psychologically attentive description of disbelievers who persist in error despite affliction — "And We seized them with punishment, but they did not yield to their Lord, nor did they humbly supplicate" (23:76) — "until when We open before them a door of severe punishment, immediately they will be therein in despair" (23:77).

23:78–92 assembles a series of rhetorical questions asserting God's sole sovereignty over hearing, sight, the hearts of creatures, and life and death, structured as a refutation of polytheist claims about intercessory deities: "Say, 'To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you should know?'" (23:84), followed by parallel questions about the heavens and the "Lord of the seven heavens." The passage notes that the Meccan polytheists would, if pressed, concede these points of sovereignty to God alone while continuing to venerate intermediary deities (23:85–89) — a rhetorical strategy, common across the Meccan corpus, of using an audience's own theological premises against their cultic practice. The unit culminates in an explicit denial that

God has taken a son or that any other deity exists alongside Him, "lest each deity have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others" (23:91) — an argument-from-coherence against polytheism that recurs across the Meccan corpus and has parallels, as academic comparative work has noted, in late-antique philosophical arguments against plural divine causation circulating in the broader late-antique Near East.

The surah's close (23:93–118) moves to eschatology. The Prophet is instructed to seek refuge "from the incitements of the devils" and from their presence (23:97–98), followed by a widely cited passage on the moment of death: when death comes to the wrongdoer, he requests, "My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind" (23:99–100), a request the text flatly refuses — "No! It is only a word he is saying... and behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected." This exchange is treated in the exegetical and academic literature alike as one of the Qur'an's clearest statements on the irrevocability of the boundary between worldly life and the intermediate state (barzakh). The passage on the weighing of deeds follows (23:102–105), including the dialogue in which the damned recall having mocked believers and treated Qur'anic recitation with derision (23:105–110) — a scene that classical exegetes read as a mirror image of the mockery Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's own contemporaries directed at him, reversing the social hierarchy of scorn in the eschatological setting. The surah closes with the frequently quoted rhetorical question, "Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that to Us you would not be returned?" (23:115), followed by a final affirmation of divine transcendence: "So exalted is Allah, the Sovereign, the Truth; there is no deity except Him" (23:116), and the closing exhortation to prayer for forgiveness and mercy (23:118).

Surah an-Nur (24:1–64)

The transition to Surah an-Nur is abrupt in register: where al-Mu'minun closes on cosmic affirmation, an-Nur opens with explicit legislative framing — "[This is] a surah which We have sent down and made obligatory and revealed therein verses of clear evidence that you might remember" (24:1). The surah is Medinan and reflects, as the sira tradition and academic

historical scholarship concur, the developing legal and social apparatus of the community in the years following the Hijra rather than the polemical concerns of the earlier Meccan material.

24:2 states the penalty for zina (illicit sexual intercourse) between an unmarried woman and man: "The [unmarried] woman or [unmarried] man found guilty of sexual intercourse - lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for them in the religion of Allah." Classical exegetes including al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir discuss this verse alongside two further bodies of material: first, material understood by the tradition (linked to Surah an-Nisa 4:15–16) as describing an earlier, superseded stage of the community's approach to the offense, involving confinement to the home; and second, hadith reports (transmitted in Sahih Muslim and Sunan Abu Dawud, among other collections) describing stoning (rajm) as the penalty applied to married offenders — a penalty not stated in the Qur'anic wording of 24:2 itself. The relationship between the lashing penalty explicit in this verse and the stoning penalty attested in hadith is a well-known point of classical legal-exegetical discussion, addressed differently across the schools of law, concerning how Qur'anic wording and prophetic sunna interrelate as sources of legal penalty; modern academic legal historians have likewise treated this juxtaposition as a case study in the formation of Islamic criminal law out of scriptural and extra-scriptural sources together.

24:4 addresses a related but distinct offense, qadhf — the accusation of unchastity leveled at a chaste person without the production of four witnesses: "And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses - lash them with eighty lashes." This is followed at 24:6–9 by the li'an procedure, a mechanism by which a husband accusing his own wife of infidelity, lacking the four-witness standard, may instead swear a fourfold oath invoking a curse upon himself if he is lying, with the wife able to avert punishment by a parallel fourfold oath. Classical hadith (transmitted in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim) trace the occasion for this legislation to the case of a Companion named Hilal ibn Umayya, who accused his wife of adultery without producing witnesses, prompting the revelation of this alternative evidentiary mechanism — one of the more clearly attested

instances of asbab al-nuzul (occasions of revelation) in this portion of the text, and one later jurists drew on extensively in constructing the procedural law of li'an.

The surah's best-documented occasion of revelation, however, is the extended passage at 24:11–20 concerning the Ifk (slander) — "Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you. Do not think it bad for you; rather it is good for you" (24:11). Classical sources — al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Qurtubi among them — transmit in detail the narrative underlying these verses, drawing on the lengthy first-person account of 'A'isha bint Abi Bakr preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim: during the return march from the expedition against the Banu al-Mustaliq (traditionally dated to around the fifth or sixth year after the Hijra, though the precise year is debated among sira scholars), 'A'isha was inadvertently left behind by the caravan when it departed before she had returned to her litter, and was subsequently brought back to Medina by a Companion, Safwan ibn al-Mu'attal, who had also fallen behind. A slander campaign followed in Medina, associated in the sources with 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy among others, alleging impropriety; the Prophet is described in the hadith account as passing through a period of uncertainty before the revelation of this passage, which the classical tradition reads as a direct and decisive exoneration of 'A'isha. This is one of the clearest cases in the entire Qur'an where the exegetical tradition ties a sustained passage to a single, well-documented historical episode, and it is treated as such in both classical tafsir and modern academic accounts of Qur'anic asbab al-nuzul, though it should be noted that the identification of specific verses within the unit with specific moments of the narrative sometimes varies between commentators. The passage moves from the specific narrative into broader exhortation against the uncritical circulation of rumor — "And why, when you heard it, did you not say, 'It is not appropriate for us to speak of this'?" (24:16) — and, after further legislation on the required standard of witnesses for accusations of unchastity generally (24:23–25), closes with the pairing formula, "Good women are for good men, and good men are for good women, and good words are for good men, and good men are for good words" (24:26), read by the exegetical tradition as a further vindication of 'A'isha's character by structural implication.

24:27–34 shifts to household and comportment regulations: rules requiring permission before entering others' homes (24:27–29), instructions to lower the gaze and guard modesty addressed first to believing men (24:30) and then, at greater length, to believing women (24:31), encouragement of marriage for the unmarried and for enslaved persons of good character, with the additional instruction that God will enrich the poor from His bounty (24:32), a related provision permitting enslaved persons to contract for their own manumission (mukataba) and encouraging masters to assist them financially (24:33a), and an explicit prohibition on coercing slave-girls into prostitution for material gain (24:33b). Some exegetical reports link the permission-before-entering material to an incident involving a woman of the Ansar who complained to the Prophet of having been seen in a state of undress when a man entered her quarters unannounced, though the chains of transmission for this report are less uniformly strong than those underlying the Ifk narrative, and this connection should be treated with appropriate caution rather than as an established occasion of revelation.

24:31 itself — instructing believing women to lower their gaze, guard their chastity, and "not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof," to draw their khumur (head-coverings) over their chests (juyub), and specifying a list of male relatives and others before whom adornment need not be concealed — is among the most extensively discussed legal-ethical verses in the entire Qur'an and forms the textual anchor for later juristic elaboration on women's dress. Classical exegetes including al-Tabari, al-Qurtubi, and az-Zamakhshari transmit differing early views, attributed to various Companions and Successors, on the scope of the phrase "what is apparent" (ma zahara minha) — that is, which adornment or bodily area may licitly be shown. This diversity in the earliest exegetical layer is noted by academic scholars of gender and legal history, including Barbara Freyer Stowasser and Leila Ahmed, whose work on the historical development of veiling practices distinguishes the comparatively open-textured Qur'anic wording from the more expansive and codified discourse on covering developed in subsequent centuries of fiqh. Academic treatments in this vein generally emphasize that the verse's own language leaves considerable interpretive latitude that later jurisprudence progressively

narrowed, a point of interest to historians of law and gender independent of any normative position on the matter.

At 24:35 the surah offers its best-known passage, commonly termed Ayat an-Nur, the Light Verse: "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills." The verse continues with mention of houses "which Allah has ordered to be raised" and in which His name is remembered, glorified morning and evening by men whom neither trade nor sale distracts from that remembrance (24:36–37) — understood by the exegetical tradition to refer to mosques — before the passage contrasts this light with the darkness of the disbeliever's works, "like a mirage in a lowland which a thirsty one thinks is water" (24:39) and "like the darkness of a deep sea covered by waves, upon which are waves, over which are clouds - darknesses, some of them upon others" (24:40). Az-Zamakhshari's rhetorically attentive, Mu'tazili-inflected reading treats the verse as an extended simile (tamthil) for guidance rather than a literal ontological claim about God's nature as physical light, a construal that proved influential in subsequent Sunni exegesis, including that of al-Qurtubi, notwithstanding the differing theological commitments of the two exegetes. The verse also generated a distinct philosophical and mystical commentary tradition of its own, most notably al-Ghazali's Mishkat al-Anwar (The Niche of Lights), a later theological-Sufi elaboration rather than a work of classical tafsir proper, which reads the verse's imagery through a broader metaphysics of divine and creaturely light. Academic scholarship on Islamic philosophy and mysticism — including studies of the illuminationist (Ishraqi) tradition associated with Suhrawardi, and of the Hellenistic-influenced cosmological themes present in figures such as Ibn Sina — frequently treats this verse as a significant point of contact between Qur'anic exegesis and philosophical cosmology within the Islamic intellectual tradition. The verses immediately following (24:41–45), affirming that all things in the heavens and earth, including the birds in flight, glorify God each in a manner suited to their own mode of being, and describing the formation of clouds, hail, and lightning,

and the varied modes of animal locomotion ("of them are those that move on their bellies, and of them are those that walk on two legs, and of them are those that walk on four"), continue the sign-oriented natural theology found earlier in the juz' at 23:17–22, and are likewise discussed in academic literature on the Qur'an's argument-from-design rhetoric.

24:47–57 addresses those "who say, 'We have believed in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey' then a party of them turns away" (24:47) when summoned to arbitration before God and His Messenger — commonly read, both by classical exegetes and later scholarship, as directed at the hypocrites (munafiqun) of Medina, whose selective obedience is contrasted with the unqualified submission expected of genuine believers, who are described as saying simply, "We hear and we obey" (24:51). The passage closes with the istikhlaf verse (24:55), a promise that God will grant those who believe and do righteous deeds "succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He caused those before them to succeed [to it]," conditioned on continued worship free of associating partners with God — a verse of considerable later significance in Islamic political theology concerning the theological grounding of communal authority and governance, and one frequently cited in later centuries in discussions of the legitimacy of rule.

The surah's closing unit (24:58–64) returns to domestic regulation: instructions that household servants and children not yet of age seek permission before entering private quarters at three specified times of day (before dawn prayer, midday, and after night prayer — moments associated with undress) (24:58), a parallel requirement of permission-seeking once children reach maturity (24:59), a provision allowing elderly women past the prospect of marriage to set aside some outer garments without display of adornment, provided modesty is still preferred (24:60), rules permitting eating in the company of relatives and close associates, or alone, without formal invitation, accompanied by the instruction to greet one's own household with the greeting of peace upon entering (24:61), and closing verses distinguishing genuine believers, who do not slip away from communal gatherings convened by the Prophet without seeking leave, from those whose excuses are merely self-serving (24:62–63), ending on a statement of God's comprehensive knowledge of all affairs and of the Day on

which all will be returned to Him: "certainly He knows that upon which you stand [i.e., your affairs]" (24:64).

The opening of Surah al-Furqan (25:1–20)

The juz' closes with the first twenty verses of Surah al-Furqan, a Meccan surah whose opening declares: "Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion (al-Furqan) upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner - He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and He has not taken a son... and He has created each thing and precisely determined it" (25:1–2). The designation of the revealed text as "Criterion" — a term denoting that which distinguishes truth from falsehood — sets the surah's polemical register from its opening line, reasserting divine unity and rejecting the idea that God has taken a son or has any partner in dominion, and denying, at 25:3, any efficacy to the deities the polytheists have taken besides Him, which the text describes as unable to create anything, being themselves created, and possessing no power to help or harm even themselves.

The following verses catalogue Meccan objections to the Qur'an's authenticity and to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophetic claim: disbelievers say "this is not except a falsehood he invented" (25:4) and that the Qur'an consists of "legends of the former peoples which he has written down, and they are dictated to him morning and afternoon" (25:5) — an objection the text answers at 25:6 with the assertion that the revelation instead descends from one who knows the secret of the heavens and earth. More pointedly, at 25:7–9, the objection turns to the Prophet's ordinary human status: "And they say, 'What is this messenger that eats food and walks in the markets? Why was there not sent down to him an angel to be with him as a warner?'" — an objection followed by mockery over his lack of a treasure or a garden from which to eat, and the charge that he is simply "a man affected by magic" (25:8). Classical exegetes, including Ibn Kathir and al-Tabari, identify the speakers as leading figures among the Meccan polytheists, with some transmitted reports naming individuals such as al-Walid ibn al-Mughira, though the chains of transmission supporting specific individual attribution vary in strength and should be regarded as tentative rather than firmly established. The Qur'anic response, developed further in

the surah beyond the portion covered in this juz', is that every prior messenger likewise ate food and walked in markets, denying that ordinary human embodiment disqualifies prophetic office; the objection and its rebuttal have been read by academic scholarship on Qur'anic polemic as reflecting a broader late-antique debate, shared with earlier Jewish and Christian prophetic and apostolic traditions, over what forms of ordinariness are compatible with claims to divine commission. At 25:10, the passage pivots from rebuttal to counter-promise, asserting that God is capable of granting the Prophet gardens and palaces far superior to what his critics imagine he lacks, were He to will it — reframing the polemic about material deficiency as itself a matter within God's discretion rather than a genuine argument against prophecy.

25:11–14 turns to eschatological threat, describing the disbelievers' denial of the Hour and the blazing fire (sa'ir) prepared for them, a fire the text depicts as roaring with rage when it sees them from a distance (25:12) and into whose confined recesses they will be flung bound together, crying out for their own destruction (25:13–14) — met with the retort that they should cry out for many destructions rather than one, since more suffering yet awaits. This is contrasted at 25:15–16 with the Garden of Eternity promised to the righteous, described as a reward and destination in which they have whatever they wish, abiding forever, a promise the text presents as binding upon God by His own undertaking (25:16). The unit closes, within the scope of this juz', with a scene in which the false objects of worship — described as unable even to control benefit or harm for themselves, let alone bring about resurrection — are themselves gathered on the Day of Judgment and made to testify against those who worshipped them, denying that they had ever called their worshippers to error and observing that it was rather the worshippers themselves, forgetful of due remembrance, who strayed and brought ruin upon themselves (25:17–19). Classical exegetes read this passage as directed in the first instance at those Meccan polytheists who venerated angels or righteous figures such as Jesus as intermediaries, whose objects of veneration will, on the classical reading, disown that veneration rather than validate it. The unit and the juz' close together at 25:20 with the observation that all messengers sent before likewise ate food and walked in markets — a direct echo of 25:7–9, closing the polemical unit with its own

refrain — and that human beings have been made a trial for one another, the wealthy for the poor and the powerful for the weak, so as to test their patience, with God as the One who sees all.

Unlike the Medinan material in Surah an-Nur, the opening of al-Furqan carries no specific traceable occasion of revelation in the classical sources; sira and tafsir literature situate it generally within the broader climate of Quraysh polemic against Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophetic claims during the Meccan period, rather than tying it to any single dated incident, in contrast to the closely documented Ifk episode earlier in the juz'. This absence of a datable occasion is itself unremarkable for Meccan polemical material of this kind, which academic chronological scholarship typically treats as addressing a recurring, rather than a singular, rhetorical situation — the sustained argument between Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him and the Meccan elite over the plausibility of his claim to prophecy — rather than a single episode susceptible to narrative reconstruction.

Synthesis

Read across its three constituent surahs, this portion of the Qur'an moves from an anatomy of the successful believer and a compressed survey of prophetic rejection and eschatological reckoning (al-Mu'minun), through the detailed legal and domestic architecture of the Medinan community confronting concrete cases of sexual accusation, slander, and household conduct (an-Nur), to a renewed Meccan defense of revelation's authenticity against the specific charge that a genuine messenger ought not share in the ordinariness of eating and walking in markets (the opening of al-Furqan). The juz' thus juxtaposes, without historical continuity, two distinct registers of Qur'anic discourse — the cosmological-polemical and the legal-social — joined here principally by the codex's own logic of arrangement rather than by any compositional design. Its most consequential legacy for later tradition lies less in narrative than in the specific verses that generated sustained juristic, philosophical, and social-historical elaboration: the zina and qadhf penalties and the li'an procedure that became foundational reference points in classical criminal and family law; the gaze and adornment verse that anchored centuries of subsequent debate on dress; and the Light Verse, whose afterlife extended from classical rhetorical exegesis into a distinct

philosophical-mystical commentary tradition exemplified by al-Ghazali and, later, the illuminationist philosophers. The Ifk narrative, meanwhile, stands as one of the Qur'an's most thoroughly documented instances of the interplay between scriptural text and a specific, hadith-attested historical event, in pointed contrast to the undated, recurrent rhetorical situation addressed by the Meccan polemic that opens al-Furqan and closes this portion of the codex.

Juz’ 19: Surah al-Furqan 25:21 — Surah an-Naml 27:55

Surah al-Furqan 25:21 through Surah an-Naml 27:55

Juz' 19: Surah al-Furqan 25:21 – Surah an-Naml 27:55

Juz' 19 opens near the close of Surah al-Furqan, turns through the whole of Surah ash-Shu'ara with its cycle of prophetic narratives, and carries into the opening third of Surah an-Naml, culminating in the Solomon and Bilqis narrative. Thematically the juz' is organized around a single argument pursued through varied literary means: that rejection of prophetic warning is a recurring, patterned feature of human history, that divine power is visible both in nature and in the reversals of fortune worked upon nations, and that true nobility—whether the humility of the "servants of the Most Merciful" or the political wisdom of a queen—consists in submission to God rather than resistance to Him.

Surah al-Furqan 25:21–44: The Meccan polemic continued

The juz' begins mid-argument. The disbelievers of Mecca are shown demanding a direct vision of angels or of God himself as a precondition for belief, a demand the surah treats as evasion rather than sincere inquiry: "They say, 'Why are not angels sent down to us, or [why] do we [not] see our Lord?'" The response anticipates the Day of Judgment, when such arrogance will be reversed. Verses 25:27–29 depict a condemned soul biting his hands in regret: "And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, 'Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way.'" Exegetical literature, including reports preserved in al-Wahidi's *Asbab al-Nuzul* and repeated by later commentators, associates this image with the Meccan figure 'Uqba ibn Abi Mu'ayt, said to have inclined toward accepting Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's message before being dissuaded by his companion Ubayy ibn Khalaf, and to have come to regret the association that led him from guidance. As with much asbab al-nuzul material, the chains supporting this identification vary in strength, and the verse's force does not depend on the specific identification; it functions as a general warning against choosing companionship over truth.

The passage then surveys the fate of previous nations—'Ad, Thamud, and the people of al-Rass—briefly invoked as historical confirmation that God "destroyed [them all], and We coined for [all] similitudes." This foreshadows, in compressed form, the extended narrative treatment the same nations receive later in Surah ash-Shu'ara. The section closes with a memorable psychological observation, Q25:43–44: "Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? Then would you be responsible for him? Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? They are not except like livestock—rather, they are more astray in [their] way." Here the Qur'an locates the root of disbelief not in intellectual deficiency but in the enthronement of appetite as an object of devotion, a diagnosis that recurs across the Meccan corpus.

Surah al-Furqan 25:45–62: Signs in nature and the argument for resurrection

A shift follows to a meditative register, in which natural phenomena are presented as evidence of divine power and mercy: the extension and contraction of shadow, the alternation of night and day "for whoever desires to remember or desires gratitude," the winds sent as "good tidings before His mercy," rain that gives life to a "dead land," and the meeting of "the two seas, one fresh and sweet and one salty and bitter," separated by an unseen barrier. These natural signs function argumentatively: a God who orders shadow, wind, and water can also raise the dead, and the passage moves directly from cosmological observation to eschatological claim. Q25:59 makes the connection explicit, describing the Creator of the heavens and earth as the one who then "established Himself above the Throne," while affirming that the Prophet's mission as warner (25:56) is continuous with this same providential order. The section closes by contrasting the disbelievers' rejection of the Merciful (al-Rahman) as a divine name they refuse to acknowledge, with 25:61's cosmic praise of the One "who has placed in the sky great stars and placed therein a burning lamp and a luminous moon."

Surah al-Furqan 25:63–77: The servants of the Most Merciful

The surah closes with its most celebrated passage, a portrait of the *'ibad al-Rahman*, the servants of the Most Merciful, spanning fifteen verses of sustained ethical description. Q25:63 opens the sequence: "And the servants

of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace." The verse establishes two markers simultaneously—an unassuming manner of bearing oneself in the world, and restraint in response to provocation. Classical and later exegetes commonly cite hadith literature praising a moderate, unhurried gait and gentle speech (reports found in collections such as Abu Dawud) as behavioral illustrations of this verse, though such hadith stand as independent parallel material rather than direct commentary upon it.

The portrait continues through successive qualities: night vigil, "those who spend the night to their Lord, prostrating and standing [in prayer]" (25:64); fear of Hell's punishment (25:65–66); financial moderation, "those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly, but are ever, between that, [justly] moderate" (25:67); avoidance of the gravest sins—invoking false gods, unlawful killing, and unlawful sexual relations (25:68); and, pivotally, the possibility of repentance even after such transgressions. Q25:70 states: "Except for those who repent, believe and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful." This verse functions theologically as a hinge within the passage: rather than presenting moral perfection as the criterion of belonging among God's servants, it presents a capacity for sincere turning that transforms the moral record itself, replacing prior evil with good. The passage closes with further qualities—avoidance of false witness, receptivity to admonition (25:73), the prayer to be granted righteous offspring and to be made "a leader for the righteous" (25:74), and the promise that such servants will be rewarded "the highest place [in Paradise] because of what they patiently endured" (25:75). A note of caution attaches to hadith cited in praise of reciting or reflecting on this passage specifically: such virtue-of-passage reports circulate with varying and often weak (da'if) chains and should not be presented as firmly established, even though the passage's content is uncontroversial and widely commented upon.

Surah ash-Shu'ara: Structure and the prophetic narrative cycles

Surah ash-Shu'ara ("The Poets") comprises 227 verses and occupies the central bulk of this juz'. Its most distinctive structural feature, noted by both classical and modern scholarship, is a sequence of seven prophetic

narratives told in a near-formulaic pattern, each concluding with the refrain: "Indeed in that is a sign, but most of them were not to be believers. And indeed, your Lord—He is the Exalted in Might, the Merciful." Al-Tabari observes that this repeated refrain performs a specific rhetorical function: it reinforces the surah's central argument that the rejection of prophets by their own communities is a recurring historical pattern rather than a phenomenon unique to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's Meccan opponents. Western academic scholarship, including the work of Angelika Neuwirth and Nicolai Sinai, similarly identifies this narrative form as an example of what has been termed the "punishment narrative" or *Straflegende*, a genre recurring across several Meccan surahs and read, in Neuwirth's form-critical approach, as evidence of deliberate compositional patterning within the Meccan corpus. Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading treats the same repetition not as redundancy but as reinforcement of a normative model of prophethood and communal response, integral to the Qur'an's larger ethical argument rather than incidental storytelling.

The longest and most developed of the seven cycles concerns Moses and Pharaoh (26:10–68). It opens with Moses's commissioning, his hesitation over his own eloquence and the charge against him in Egypt, and his mission "to Pharaoh's people. Will they not fear Allah?" The narrative proceeds through the confrontation at Pharaoh's court, the contest with the magicians—who fall into prostration upon recognizing the source of Moses's sign, declaring belief "in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron" despite Pharaoh's threats of crucifixion and mutilation—and culminates in the parting of the sea and the deliverance of the Israelites while Pharaoh and his army are drowned in pursuit. This unit's greater length relative to the others reflects its paradigmatic status within the surah's argument: the confrontation between prophetic truth and entrenched political power, and the definitive vindication of the former.

Successive cycles treat Abraham's confrontation with his father's and people's idolatry (26:69–104), including his questioning of the efficacy of idols that "neither harm nor benefit" and his prayer for guidance and forgiveness; Noah and his people (26:105–122), who reject him as merely a man rather than an angel and are subsequently destroyed by flood while the

believers are saved; Hud and 'Ad (26:123–140), whose people are rebuked for building "on every high place a sign" out of vanity and for their tyrannical seizure of power, and destroyed by a mighty blast; Salih and Thamud (26:141–159), centered on the sign of the she-camel and the community's hamstringing of it, which precipitates their destruction; Lot and his people (26:160–175), condemned for their sexual conduct "among created beings" and destroyed by an overturning rain; and Shu'ayb, addressed to the "companions of the thicket" (Ashab al-Aykah, 26:176–191), rebuked chiefly for commercial fraud—giving short measure and weight—rather than idolatry alone. Classical commentators including Ibn Kathir and al-Tabari identify the People of the Thicket with the same Midianite community addressed by Shu'ayb elsewhere in the Qur'an, treating "the thicket" as a further topographical description of their settlement rather than an entirely distinct people, though they note that some earlier exegetes recorded minor disagreement on this point.

Across all seven cycles, no specific, individually documented occasion of revelation (asbab al-nuzul) is recorded; these narratives are best understood as didactic material delivered in the general context of Meccan-period consolation of the Prophet and warning to his opponents, rather than as responses to discrete triggering incidents.

Q26:192–213: Revelation, the trustworthy spirit, and refutation of the "devils" charge

Before turning to the address to the Prophet's kindred, the surah pauses on the nature of the revelation itself. Q26:192–195 states that the Qur'an is "the revelation of the Lord of the worlds," brought down "by the trustworthy spirit"—understood by exegetes as the angel Gabriel—"upon your heart, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], that you may be of the warners, in a clear Arabic language." The passage adds that this revelation is prefigured "in the scriptures of former peoples" (26:196), and that its recognition by learned figures among the Children of Israel functions as a sign of its authenticity (26:197). The surah then explicitly denies that the revelation could be the product of devils: "And it was not brought down by the devils. Nor would it suit them, nor would they be able" (26:210–211), on

the grounds that such beings are barred from the celestial hearing that would make such transmission possible.

Q26:214: "And warn, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], your closest kindred"

Following this defense of revelation, the surah turns directly to address the Prophet's own situation. Q26:214 commands: "And warn, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], your closest kindred." This verse carries a well-attested and specific Seerah correlation. Ibn Kathir links it to hadith reports preserved in Sahih Muslim (and elsewhere) describing the Prophet's ascent of Mount al-Safa to deliver a public warning to the clans of Quraysh, calling them by name—including Bani Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy, Bani Murrah, Bani 'Abd Shams—and addressing even his own uncle al-'Abbas, his aunt Safiyyah, and his daughter Fatimah directly, telling each that he could not avail them anything before God. Sira sources, including material preserved via Ibn Ishaq and transmitted through Ibn Hisham, associate this same charge with an early transition in the Prophet's mission from private to public preaching, sometimes connected to a gathering of Banu Hashim known as the "Feast of the Clan" (Da'wat dhi'l-'Ashira), though the precise sequencing of these episodes relative to one another varies somewhat across sources. The verse and its associated hadith are frequently cited to underscore that kinship, however close, offers no automatic exemption from accountability before God—a point reinforced by the specificity of the Prophet's address to his own immediate family.

Q26:224–227: The poets

The surah's concluding verses turn to a charge frequently leveled against Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him by his Meccan opponents—that he was merely a poet, and the Qur'an merely poetry, a charge echoed elsewhere in the Qur'an itself (as at 21:5, 36:69, 52:30). Q26:224 states starkly: "And the poets—[only] the deviators follow them." The verses that follow elaborate the charge: "Do you not see that in every valley they roam, and that they say what they do not do?" (26:225–226)—describing poets as figures given to rhetorical excess disconnected from consistent conduct. The surah then supplies an exception, Q26:227: "Except those [poets] who

believe and do righteous deeds and remember Allah often and defend [the Muslims] after they were wronged." Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi discuss this closing sequence in relation to the Meccan accusation of poetic authorship, and record an exegetical tradition—found in al-Wahidi's *Asbab al-Nuzul* and repeated by later commentators—according to which early Muslim poets, troubled by the general condemnation in 26:224, inquired about their own standing, prompting the exception in 26:227 as clarification; as with comparable reports elsewhere in this surah, the transmission of this particular account should be treated as illustrative rather than firmly documentary. Later exegetical tradition associates this exception with Companion poets such as Hassan ibn Thabit, Ka'b ibn Malik, and 'Abdullah ibn Rawaha, who used verse in defense of the Muslim community, though this identification belongs to the later interpretive tradition rather than an explicit, contemporaneous occasion of revelation. The broader Meccan conflict between the Prophet and rival poets and orators—figures such as al-Nadr ibn al-Harith and Umayyah ibn Abi'l-Salt, who are recorded in sira literature (via Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham) as having mocked the Qur'an—forms a genuine and well-attested historical backdrop to this passage, distinguishing it from the more thematic, less historically anchored material found elsewhere in the surah.

Surah an-Naml 27:1–15: Opening and the burning bush

The juz' concludes with the opening portion of Surah an-Naml ("The Ant"). The surah opens by describing the Qur'an as "guidance and good tidings for the believers" (27:2), distinguishing believers who establish prayer and give charity and have certainty in the Hereafter from those who do not believe, for whom their deeds are made to appear pleasing despite their wandering in blindness (27:4–5). A brief narrative of Moses at the burning bush follows (27:7–14), in which Moses, perceiving a fire, goes toward it seeking either guidance or a burning torch, only to be addressed directly: "It is I who am Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise" (27:9), and given the signs of the staff and the radiant hand, before being commissioned to Pharaoh and his people, "who are a defiantly disobedient people" (27:12). The account closes by noting that Pharaoh's people rejected these signs "out of injustice and haughtiness," even while their souls were convinced of their truth (27:14)—a

brief but pointed observation that disbelief here is presented as willful rather than a matter of insufficient evidence. This compact retelling functions as a prelude within the surah's broader structure, transitioning from a brief evocation of Moses to the extended narrative of Solomon that dominates the remainder of the juz'.

Q27:15–44: Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

The Solomon narrative opens with a declaration of inherited prophethood and knowledge: Q27:16, "And Solomon inherited David. He said, 'O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty.'" Az-Zamakhshari's philological treatment in *al-Kashshaf* gives close attention to the phrase "the language of birds" (*mantiq al-tayr*), reading it as a distinctive grant of special knowledge (*fadl*) given specifically to Solomon rather than a general claim about prophetic linguistic competence. The verse establishes both Solomon's continuity with his father David's prophetic office and the particular, extraordinary character of the dominion he was given—one encompassing not only human subjects but jinn, birds, and the wind.

The narrative's most frequently cited episode follows at Q27:18–19, the "Valley of the Ants": "Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, 'O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not.' So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech." Az-Zamakhshari analyzes the grammatical structure of the ant's reported speech as itself a marker of Qur'anic eloquence, notable precisely because it is attributed to non-human speech. Al-Qurtubi surveys a juristic and linguistic discussion among earlier scholars over whether this speech should be understood as a literal miraculous communication genuinely perceived and understood by Solomon, or as a figurative narrative device; he records that the majority classical position affirms it as a literal miracle (*mu'jiza*) specifically granted to Solomon, consistent with the surah's broader emphasis on Solomon's unique endowments.

The narrative continues with the episode of the hoopoe (*hudhud*, 27:20–28), whose temporary absence draws Solomon's stern warning of punishment, but who returns bearing intelligence of a kingdom ruled by a

woman "given of all things, and she has a great throne," whose people worship the sun rather than God (27:23–24). This report prompts Solomon to dispatch a letter, whose text is quoted directly at Q27:29–31: the queen (identified in exegetical tradition as Bilqis) informs her council, "O eminent ones, indeed, to me has been delivered a noble letter. Indeed, it is from Solomon, and indeed, it reads: In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. Be not haughty with me but come to me in submission." The quoted text of the letter, opening with the Qur'an's own invocational formula (the *basmala*), is a distinctive feature of the passage, embedding a formal written communication within the narrative itself.

The queen's response to her council includes a maxim of considerable independent significance, Q27:34: "She said, 'Indeed kings—when they enter a city, they ruin it and render the honored of its people humbled. And thus do they do.'" This observation, offered as her rationale for caution before confrontation, is frequently cited independently in later discussion of statecraft and the destructive tendencies of conquest, functioning within the narrative as evidence of the queen's political prudence prior to her ultimate submission.

The episode of the transported throne follows (27:38–42), in which Solomon, informed that the queen is coming to him, asks his assembly which of them can bring her throne before she arrives "in submission." A jinn offers to bring it before Solomon rises from his seat; one "who had knowledge from the Scripture" offers to bring it faster still, "before your glance returns to you"—rendered in the passage's memorable phrase, before her eyes could return to her (27:40). Upon its arrival, the throne is disguised to test her recognition (27:41), and upon seeing it she responds, "[It is] as though it is it," prompting Solomon's reflection that she and her people had previously been diverted from true worship by what they were accustomed to.

The narrative's climax arrives when the queen is brought before what appears to be a crystal pavement resembling a body of water, causing her to bare her legs in anticipation of wading through it, only to be told that it is "a palace [whose floor is] made smooth of glass" (27:44). At this recognition of Solomon's dominion and wisdom, she declares: "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, and I submit with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds." Ibn

'Ashur, in *al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir*, situates this extended narrative within the surah's broader rhetorical purpose: to demonstrate that true sovereignty and wisdom culminate in submission to God, reading the queen's declaration as the thematic climax of the passage regarding the proper relationship between worldly power and monotheism—a ruler of substantial and independently recognized political skill nonetheless arriving, through observation and reflection, at recognition of a greater sovereignty.

No specific, well-authenticated hadith documents a particular occasion of revelation for this narrative; the material draws primarily upon *qisas al-anbiya'* (tales of the prophets) literature and exegetical reports, some of which are traceable to material transmitted from Jewish and Christian tradition (*isra'iliyyat*)—a point classical commentators, including Ibn Kathir, explicitly flag when relaying embellished details regarding the jinn, the precise dialogue of the hoopoe, or particulars of the queen's throne not found in the Qur'anic text itself. Academic literature, including comparative work noting parallels in Jewish and Christian tradition such as the Targum Sheni to Esther and the biblical account in 1 Kings 10, discusses shared narrative motifs—the hoopoe, the throne, the queen's visit—while cautioning against a simplistic model of direct borrowing, favoring instead a view of the Qur'anic account as engaging a broader late-antique Near Eastern narrative tradition concerning Solomon, a matter of ongoing scholarly discussion rather than settled consensus.

Q27:45–55: Salih and Thamud, and the opening of the Lot narrative

The juz' closes with a brief return to the account of Salih and the Thamud (27:45–53), focusing here on the conspiracy of nine men who plot to kill Salih and his household by night, a plot that instead results in the destruction of the plotters themselves along with their people, while the believers are delivered. This compressed retelling, appearing after the fuller version already given in Surah ash-Shu'ara, illustrates a broader compositional feature of the Qur'an's narrative economy: the same account recurs across surahs with shifting emphasis, here foregrounding the failure of a secret plot rather than the sign of the she-camel emphasized earlier. The account then opens the narrative of Lot (27:54–55), introduced with his rebuke of his

people for their sexual conduct, a narrative whose fuller development continues into the following juz'.

Synthesis

Across its three constituent surahs, Juz' 19 pursues a single argument through markedly different literary registers: reasoned appeal to natural signs and psychological diagnosis in the close of al-Furqan; a sustained, formulaic cycle of prophetic punishment-narratives in ash-Shu'ara, reinforced by a refrain insisting on the historical constancy of prophetic rejection; and a richly detailed single narrative in the opening of an-Naml, in which political wisdom and worldly power are shown converging, through the figure of Bilqis, upon submission to God. Two passages—the description of the "servants of the Most Merciful" and the queen's declaration of submission—function as complementary answers to the same underlying question the surah cycle poses: what does a right response to God actually look like, whether in the humble daily conduct of an ordinary believer or in the considered judgment of a powerful ruler. The juz' also documents, through the reliably attested verse on warning one's closest kindred, a genuine and specific moment in the Prophet's biography, while candidly showing—through its treatment of the Solomon-Sheba material and other narrative embellishments—the presence of later exegetical and cross-traditional material that classical scholarship itself distinguishes from the Qur'anic text proper.

Notes on the review: The draft already covered every major passage in the assigned range (25:21–77; the whole of ash-Shu'ara including the revelation/kindred/poets sections; 27:1–55). I added a short paragraph on Q27:14 (Pharaoh's people's willful rejection despite inward conviction), which had been passed over between the burning-bush account and the Solomon narrative, and a closing paragraph noting the compositional significance of the Salih/Thamud retelling at 27:45–53, which the draft had mentioned only in passing. I softened a few citation claims where a report's transmission was treated as more secure than warranted (the poets' inquiry tradition, the Da'wat dhi'l-'Ashira sequencing) without deleting the material, and tightened

several section transitions. Length is approximately 5,600 words, within the requested range.

Juz’ 20: Surah an-Naml 27:56 — Surah al-‘Ankabut 29:45

Surah an-Naml 27:56 through Surah al-‘Ankabut 29:45

This juz' spans the closing third of Surah an-Naml, the whole of Surah al-Qasas, and roughly two-thirds of Surah al-‘Ankabut — a stretch of the Qur'an dominated by prophetic narrative and structured around a single organizing theme: divine reversal, the humbling of the arrogant and the vindication of the oppressed. It moves from the final tawhid-arguments and eschatological signs that close al-Naml, through the Qur'an's most sustained narrative treatment of Musa's life from infancy to prophetic commissioning in al-Qasas, into al-‘Ankabut's compressed survey of earlier prophets and its meditation on trial (fitnah) as the proof of sincere faith. Comparative and academic scholarship situates all three surahs in the middle-to-late Meccan period, reading their narrative expansiveness as a literary and pastoral response to the intensifying persecution of the early Muslim community.

An-Naml 27:56–58: The coda on Lut

The juz' opens mid-narrative, with the brief closing notice of the destruction visited upon the people of Lut, continuing material begun earlier in the surah alongside the accounts of Salih and the Thamud. "So We saved him and his family, except his wife; We destined her to be of those who remained behind" (27:57) recapitulates a formula familiar from other Meccan narrations of this story — the singling out of Lut's wife as complicit in her people's rejection, a detail exegetes consistently read as underscoring that kinship offers no exemption from divine judgment when belief is absent. The passage functions here as a brief narrative coda rather than a fresh unit, closing off the surah's earlier cycle of destroyed nations before pivoting to a different rhetorical register.

An-Naml 27:59–66: The rhetorical sequence of tawhid

The surah then turns to one of the Qur'an's most celebrated rhetorical structures: a sequence of parallel questions, each beginning "Is He [not best]..." (a-man), contrasting God's exclusive capacities with the impotence of whatever is worshipped besides Him. Representative is 27:60: "Or, who has created the heavens and the earth and sent down for you rain from the

sky, causing to grow thereby gardens of joyful beauty...? Is there a deity with Allah? [No], but they are a people who ascribe equals [to Him]." The sequence culminates in the pivotal verse of the passage, 27:62: "Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with Allah? Little do you remember." This verse has functioned across the exegetical tradition as a classic proof-text for tawhid grounded not in abstract cosmological argument but in lived religious experience — the universal human recourse to a higher power in extremity, which the Qur'an treats as an implicit admission of monotheism even among polytheists. The sequence closes with 27:65, "Say, 'None in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah,'" restricting knowledge of the ghayb to God alone and thereby foreclosing any competing claim — whether idol, soothsayer, or astrologer — to command comparable authority. Exegetes generally treat 27:59–66 as a unified rhetorical unit rather than isolated verses, its cumulative force lying precisely in repetition and escalation.

An-Naml 27:67–75: Resurrection, skepticism, and the Book

The disbelievers' recurring objection to resurrection — "When we have become dust as well as our forefathers, will we indeed be brought out [of the graves]?" — receives the Qur'an's standard response: that this had been promised before, that it is not beyond divine power, and that all things are already recorded, "there is no unseen thing in the heaven and the earth except that it is in a clear Register [kitab mubin]" (27:75). This image of a comprehensive divine ledger recurs throughout the Meccan corpus as a warrant for the certainty of both resurrection and reckoning, independent of human capacity to verify it empirically.

An-Naml 27:76–81: The Qur'an, the Israelites, and prophetic frustration

A short but theologically significant passage notes that "this Qur'an relates to the Children of Israel most of that over which they differ" (27:76), positioning revelation as arbiter of scriptural disputes rather than mere repetition of earlier material. This is followed by one of the Qur'an's several metaphor-clusters on the futility of addressing those unwilling to hear: "Indeed, you do

not make the dead hear, nor do you make the deaf hear the call when they have turned their backs retreating" (27:80). Exegetes read this not as a literal claim about hearing but as a figure for spiritual imperviousness — a recurring theme of prophetic frustration under rejection that resonates with the Meccan Prophet's own experience of preaching to an unreceptive audience, though no specific occasion of revelation is attached to it.

An-Naml 27:82–90: Signs of the Hour

The surah's approach to its close is marked by eschatological imagery of unusual density. Verse 27:82 introduces "a creature from the earth" (dabbah min al-ard) that will emerge "speaking to them, that the people were, of Our verses, not certain [in faith]." Ibn Kathir's tafsir on this verse compiles a range of reports on the creature's identity and function as one of the major signs preceding the Hour, while explicitly flagging that many of the more elaborate descriptive traditions rest on weak or disputed chains, counseling caution rather than confident elaboration. This caution is echoed in Sahih Muslim's Kitab al-Fitan, which lists the dabbah among major signs of the Hour — alongside the sun rising from the west, the smoke (dukhan), and the Dajjal — again with variation in detail across transmissions.

The passage builds toward the Trumpet-blast scene: "And [warn of] the Day the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will be terrified except whom Allah wills" (27:87), followed by the striking verse 27:88: "And you see the mountains, thinking them motionless, while they will pass as the passing of clouds. [It is] the work of Allah, who perfected all things. Indeed, He is Acquainted with that which you do." Classical exegetes read this uniformly as a description of the cosmic upheaval accompanying the Hour — the apparent solidity of the mountains dissolving before divine power — rather than as commentary on ordinary geological processes. In more recent decades, some popular apologetic literature has drawn on the verse's language to suggest a resonance with modern findings about tectonic plate motion or the earth's rotation; this reading exists alongside, but is distinct from, the classical eschatological consensus, and is best understood as a modern interpretive layer rather than the verse's traditionally received meaning. The passage concludes by dividing humanity into two classes on that Day — those who arrive with good

and are secure from terror, and those who arrive with evil and are cast into the Fire (27:89–90), a binary the surah repeats in various forms across the Meccan corpus.

An-Naml 27:91–93: The closing address on "this city"

The surah's final verses turn from cosmic scenes to a direct statement of the Prophet's mission: "I have only been commanded to worship the Lord of this city, who made it sacred and to whom belongs everything. And I have been commanded to be of the Muslims and to recite the Qur'an." Al-Tabari identifies "this city" (hadhihi al-balad) unambiguously with Mecca, and "the Lord of this city" with the God of the Ka'ba whose sanctity Quraysh themselves nominally upheld even while rejecting the Prophet's message. Ibn 'Ashur similarly reads this closing address as anchoring the Prophet's mission concretely in his own city's sanctuary — a rhetorical move that presses Quraysh's inconsistency: they honor the sanctuary's sanctity yet reject the one who calls them to its Lord exclusively. The surah closes with a warning-and-promise formula characteristic of Meccan surah endings, reaffirming that guidance and error are alike known to God and that the outcome rests with Him.

Al-Qasas: The Musa narrative cycle (28:1–42)

Al-Qasas opens with a thematic statement that governs the entire surah: "Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into factions, oppressing a sector among them, slaughtering their [newborn] sons and keeping their females alive. Indeed, he was of the corrupters" (28:4), followed immediately by the surah's key verses, 28:5–6: "And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors, and establish them in the land and show Pharaoh and Haman and their soldiers through them that which they had feared." This reversal-of-fortune motif — the humbling of tyranny and the elevation of the oppressed — is the organizing theme not merely of the Musa narrative but arguably of the surah as a whole, and Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading of the Qur'an emphasizes precisely this passage as central to the text's broader ethical-theological vision of divine justice operating through history rather than merely through individual moral reckoning.

The narrative that follows is among the Qur'an's longest continuous prophetic accounts, tracing Musa's life from infancy to commissioning in a single unbroken sequence rather than the more fragmented treatment found in some other Meccan surahs. Verse 28:7 records the instruction given to Musa's mother: "And We inspired to the mother of Moses, 'Suckle him; but when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We will return him to you and will make him one of the messengers.'" The nature of this "inspiration" (awhayna) is discussed at length by Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi: since the majority position holds that women are not sent as prophets, the awhayna here is understood as ilham — an inspired intuition or dream-like certainty — rather than formal prophetic revelation, a distinction the exegetical tradition draws carefully to preserve the conventional boundary of prophethood while still affirming the event's supernatural character.

The narrative proceeds through Musa's exposure on the river and providential adoption into Pharaoh's own household — "that he might be to them an enemy and a sorrow" (28:8) — his sister's covert supervision of his welfare, his eventual return to his mother's nursing, his maturity, his accidental killing of an Egyptian in defense of an Israelite (28:15), his flight from Egypt, his arrival at the well in Madyan where he assists the daughters of an unnamed old man (traditionally identified with Shu'ayb), and his resulting marriage and years of service. The verse marking his prayer at the well, 28:24 — "My Lord, indeed I am, for whatever good You would send down to me, in need" — has been widely cited devotionally as a model of humble reliance on God voiced at a moment of total dispossession: a fugitive, without resources, in a foreign land, articulating need rather than demand. The cycle culminates at Mount Sinai with the theophany at the burning bush and Musa's prophetic commissioning (28:30), rendered with the same core elements — the fire, the address from the tree, the call to prophethood, the staff and the hand — found in the Qur'an's other Sinai accounts, though here embedded within the surrounding biographical narrative rather than presented as a discrete unit.

Academic scholarship, following the chronological approach associated with Theodor Nöldeke and refined by Angelika Neuwirth and Nicolai Sinai, treats

this sustained narrative style as characteristic of a maturing phase of Qur'anic composition, in which longer, more developed prophetic biographies replace or supplement the shorter narrative allusions of earlier Meccan material. Neuwirth's form-critical analysis associates this shift with a deepening Qur'anic engagement with biblical and post-biblical Israelite storytelling traditions, likely transmitted orally through Jewish and Christian communities present in late-antique Arabia. Comparative work — including scholarship by Reuven Firestone and others on Qur'anic Israelite narratives — has examined points of convergence and divergence between this account and Exodus and Midrashic material, particularly regarding the structure of Pharaoh's court and the appearance of Haman, a figure whose Qur'anic role as Pharaoh's minister differs from his biblical (Esther) context; such comparative observations are best understood as matters of literary and source history rather than as claims bearing on the narrative's theological standing within the Islamic tradition. Ibn 'Ashur's al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir reads the entire Musa-Pharaoh narrative as functioning rhetorically as tasliyah — consolation — for the Prophet during the Meccan persecution, drawing a structural parallel between Pharaoh's oppression of the Israelites and Quraysh's treatment of the early Muslim community, though Ibn 'Ashur presents this as a rhetorical and structural observation rather than asserting any specific historical occasion linking a particular verse to a particular event in the Sirah.

Al-Qasas 28:43–59: Transition, revelation, and the Prophet's grief

Following the Musa cycle, the surah shifts to address the Meccans directly, reflecting on the giving of the Torah after the destruction of earlier generations (28:43) and on the pattern by which God does not destroy a people without first sending a warner (28:59). Embedded in this transitional material is one of the juz''s most seerah-significant verses, 28:56: "Indeed, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], you do not guide whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guided." Al-Qurtubi links this verse at length to reports concerning the death of Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle and protector, who reportedly died without explicitly pronouncing the shahada despite the Prophet's urging at his deathbed — an episode recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. Al-

Qurtubi's discussion extends into the related legal-theological question of whether prayer or intercession may be offered for a deceased non-Muslim relative, given Abu Talib's role in shielding the Prophet from Quraysh's hostility during the Meccan period. This is one of the more securely documented seerah linkages in the juz', resting on hadith in the authentic collections rather than merely on later exegetical inference, though the verse's general theological point — that guidance is God's exclusive prerogative — stands independently of this particular occasion.

Al-Qasas 28:60–82: Worldly life, Qarun, and the earth's swallowing

The surah then contrasts the transience of worldly enjoyment with the enduring value of what is with God (28:60), moving toward a recapitulation of the fates of Pharaoh-era arrogance called to account. This sets up the self-contained narrative of Qarun (Korah), whose story occupies 28:76–82. Qarun is introduced as belonging to the people of Musa yet transgressing against them through the sheer weight of his wealth — "his keys would burden a band of strong men" (28:76) — and his arrogant dismissal of counsel to use his wealth righteously: "I was only given it because of knowledge I have" (28:78). His downfall is swift and total: "So We caused the earth to swallow him and his home. And there was for him no company to aid him other than Allah, nor was he of those who could defend themselves" (28:81). The narrative functions as a self-contained cautionary tale on the corrupting potential of wealth and knowledge divorced from humility, paired thematically with the Pharaoh-Haman material as a further instance of the surah's reversal-of-fortune theme — outward power and prosperity offering no protection against divine reckoning.

Al-Qasas 28:83–88: Closing exhortations and the promise of return

The surah's close draws its moral together: "That home of the Hereafter We assign to those who do not desire exaltedness upon the earth or corruption. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous" (28:83). It reaches its theological high point in 28:88: "And do not invoke besides Allah another deity. There is no deity except Him. Everything will perish except His Face. His is the judgement, and to Him you will be returned." Az-Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf treats this as a powerfully rhetorical (bayani) affirmation of divine

permanence set against the total transience of created things, and the verse became a favored proof-text in later Mu'tazili and Ash'ari theological debate over the interpretation of divine attributes — specifically, what is meant by God's "Face" (wajh) in a verse of this kind, whether read literally, as a synecdoche for God's essence, or otherwise.

Just before this, 28:85 offers a personal reassurance to the Prophet: "Indeed, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], He who imposed upon you the Qur'an will take you back to a place of return." Seerah literature traditionally connects this verse to the Hijra, via a report that the Prophet, looking back at Mecca from al-Juhfa during the emigration, was consoled by this promise of eventual return — a return most exegetes understand as fulfilled at the Conquest of Mecca in 8 AH. This tradition, while widely repeated across the tafsir literature, rests on a chain of transmission that some scholars regard as less than fully established, and it is best presented as a well-attested but not uncontested strand of interpretation rather than settled historical fact.

Al-‘Ankabut 29:1–13: Trial as the proof of faith

The final surah of the juz' opens with a statement that frames its entire argument: "Do the people think that they will be left to say, 'We believe' and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars" (29:2–3). This establishes fitnah — trial, testing, affliction — as intrinsic to authentic faith rather than an anomaly requiring explanation; profession of belief without accompanying trial is presented as incomplete or unverified. Academic readings, including the interpretive approach associated with Fazlur Rahman, treat this opening as continuous with the Qur'an's broader Meccan-period emphasis on faith as ethically tested commitment rather than static profession, and some scholars read the surah's opening verses against the specific pressures of the late Meccan period, though this remains an inference drawn from content rather than an attested occasion of revelation.

Shortly after, the surah addresses the relationship between filial duty and monotheism: "And We have enjoined upon man goodness to parents. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no

knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do" (29:8). Ibn Kathir cites the well-documented occasion for this verse: Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas's mother reportedly refused to eat or drink until her son renounced Islam, a report recorded in Sahih Muslim and cited by al-Wahidi in his Asbab al-Nuzul. The verse thus performs a careful balancing act — affirming a general and enduring obligation of kindness to parents while firmly excluding obedience in matters that would compromise tawhid — and this occasion of revelation situates the verse concretely within the lived experience of early Meccan converts facing genuine family pressure to abandon their new faith, one of the more securely grounded seerah linkages in this portion of the Qur'an.

Al-‘Ankabut 29:14–27: A compressed survey of earlier prophets

Rather than sustained narrative treatment, the surah now moves rapidly through a sequence of earlier prophetic histories, compressing what elsewhere receives extended attention into brief, allusive summary. Nuh's mission and the Flood are dispatched in two verses (29:14–15): "And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years, and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers. But We saved him and the companions of the ship..." The account of Ibrahim that follows (29:16–27) is somewhat fuller, encompassing his confrontation with his people over idolatry, his declaration "You have only taken, besides Allah, idols [as intermediaries] for affection among you in worldly life" (29:25), and his eventual departure with Lut to a land blessed for the worlds — understood traditionally as a reference to the Levant. This passage functions as a historical survey rather than a sustained narrative in the manner of the Musa cycle in al-Qasas; its brevity relative to depth of earlier treatment (as in Surah Ibrahim or elsewhere) is characteristic of al-‘Ankabut's overall rhetorical strategy of rapid, cumulative citation of precedent.

Al-‘Ankabut 29:28–35: Lut and the people of Sodom

The account of Lut receives comparatively fuller treatment, echoing but not duplicating the earlier notice in al-Naml. Verse 29:29 makes explicit the ethical charge against his people: "Indeed, you approach men and obstruct

the road and commit in your gatherings [every] evil." Exegetes note the passage's added emphasis, relative to the al-Naml account, on both sexual immorality and the violation of hospitality and safe passage — themes that recur across the Qur'an's treatment of this narrative as paradigmatic instances of social as well as sexual transgression. The destruction follows, with Lut and his household spared "except his wife; We destined her to be of those who remained behind" (29:33), a formula matching the earlier al-Naml notice.

Al-‘Ankabut 29:36–40: A summary list of destroyed nations

The surah then compresses several further narratives into a single unified passage — Shu'ayb and Madyan, 'Ad, Thamud, Qarun, Pharaoh, and Haman are named in quick succession (29:36–40), each destroyed "for his sin" through differing means: "some We caused the earth to swallow, and some We drowned. And Allah would not have wronged them, but they were wronging themselves" (29:40). This is treated by exegetes as a summary rhetorical unit rather than individual narrative episodes, its cumulative force lying in the sheer number and variety of destroyed nations catalogued together, reinforcing the surah's opening theme that trial and consequence are the universal pattern of prophetic history rather than exceptions.

Al-‘Ankabut 29:41–45: The spider parable and the closing exhortation

The surah's namesake verse arrives near its close: "The example of those who take allies other than Allah is like that of the spider who takes a home. And indeed, the weakest of homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew" (29:41). Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir explain the image as turning on the proverbial fragility of the spider's web — however elaborate it appears, it offers no true shelter or strength — as a figure for the fundamental unreliability of any object of trust or protection set up besides God. Some minority reports cited in the tradition read "those who take allies other than Allah" more narrowly as referring specifically to idol-worshippers rather than to misplaced reliance in general, though the majority reading takes the parable in its broader sense.

The surah then affirms the Qur'an's intelligibility: "And these examples We present to the people, but none understand them except those of knowledge" (29:43), and turns to the purposive nature of creation: "Allah has created the heavens and the earth in truth. Indeed in that is a sign for the believers" (29:44). This portion of the surah closes — and with it, this juz' — on the relationship between recitation, prayer, and ethical restraint: "Recite, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do" (29:45). Al-Qurtubi devotes considerable attention to the question of how prayer functions to "prohibit" (tanha) immorality, canvassing the view that this describes an intrinsic restraining effect present in prayer performed with genuine presence of heart, while acknowledging the countervailing observation — reflected in a hadith preserved in Musnad Ahmad concerning a companion whose prayer seemingly failed to prevent wrongdoing, to which the Prophet responded that his prayer would eventually restrain him — that the relationship is understood as a developing and internal one rather than an automatic, mechanical guarantee. Al-Qurtubi's conclusion, representative of the broader exegetical consensus, is that the verse describes the effect of sincere prayer specifically, not ritual performance devoid of attentiveness.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, this juz' pursues a single sustained argument through varied literary means: that history itself testifies to God's justice, that trial is not incidental to faith but constitutive of it, and that neither worldly power (Pharaoh, Haman, Qarun) nor worldly wealth and status offer any purchase against divine reckoning, while the oppressed and the sincere are, in God's timing, vindicated. The closing tawhid-arguments and eschatological signs of al-Naml, the extended Musa cycle of al-Qasas with its explicit reversal-of-fortune thesis, and al-‘Ankabut's rapid-fire catalogue of earlier prophets and its spider parable all converge on this same point from different angles — rhetorical, biographical, and figurative. Academic scholarship's observation that these middle-to-late Meccan surahs increasingly favor sustained or serially compressed prophetic narrative is best understood, on both the

traditional and the historical-critical reading, as serving a pastoral function: consoling and fortifying a community under real persecution by situating its experience within a much older and, in the Qur'an's own telling, ultimately vindicated pattern.

Juz’ 21: Surah al-‘Ankabut 29:46 — Surah al-Ahzab 33:30

Surah al-‘Ankabut 29:46 through Surah al-Ahzab 33:30

Juz' Twenty-One opens amid persecution and consolation, closes amid siege and reform, and in between offers some of the Qur'an's most philosophically sustained meditations on nature, marriage, wisdom, and worship. It carries the reader through the final movement of Surah al-'Ankabut (The Spider), the whole of Surah ar-Rum (The Byzantines), the whole of Surah Luqman, the whole of Surah as-Sajdah (The Prostration), and the opening third of Surah al-Ahzab (The Confederates). The first four surahs belong to the middle-to-late Meccan period and share a rhetorical register: patient argument from the observable order of the cosmos toward the reasonableness of monotheism and resurrection, interwoven with comfort for a beleaguered minority community. Al-Ahzab, by contrast, is Medinan, and inaugurates a set of communal and legal reforms — on marriage, adoption, and prophetic authority — set against the backdrop of the most dangerous military crisis the young Muslim polity had yet faced, the siege of Medina in 5 AH. The juz' therefore pivots, roughly at its midpoint, from a theology of patient endurance to a jurisprudence of communal reconstruction.

The close of Surah al-'Ankabut (29:46–69)

The juz' begins mid-surah, in the final third of al-'Ankabut, a chapter whose earlier verses (outside this juz') had already rehearsed the fates of Noah, Abraham, Lot, Shu'ayb, and others who "denied the signs." The section opening this juz' turns from narrative exempla to a directive on method:

"And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.'" (29:46)

This verse functions as something close to a methodological charter for interfaith engagement in the Qur'anic corpus. Ibn Kathir reads it as counseling gentleness and courtesy (al-mujadala bi'llati hiya ahsan) in disputation with Jews and Christians, while preserving an explicit carve-out

for those "who commit injustice" — glossed in the exegetical tradition as those who show hostility, mock, or act in bad faith. Al-Tabari transmits reports locating the verse's application among Jewish and Christian interlocutors encountered by the early community, without fixing it to one uniform incident. The verse's closing formula — one God, mutual submission — has attracted attention in modern comparative-religion scholarship as an early articulation of theological common ground (a "common word") that does not collapse into indifferentism, since the following verses continue to defend the Qur'an's own authenticity.

That defense follows immediately in verse 48, which appeals to the Prophet's unlettered status as evidence against the charge of literary borrowing or forgery — a theme recurring across the Meccan surahs and one the Qur'an treats as decisive proof of the revelation's non-human origin.

The remaining verses of the chapter alternate between reassurance and warning. Passages such as 29:56–57, addressed to believers constrained by hostile surroundings, insist that "My earth is spacious" and that every soul will taste death regardless of where it dwells — a consolation apparently aimed at Muslims contemplating emigration. Verse 64 delivers a characteristically terse Meccan verdict on worldly attachment: "This worldly life is nothing but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter — that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew." The surah's final verse then supplies its most quoted line, functioning almost as a summary maxim for the whole:

"And those who strive for Us — We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good." (29:69)

The term used for "strive," jahadu, is the verbal root behind jihad/mujahada, and classical and later commentators alike have read this verse broadly — as a statement about spiritual effort and ethical striving generally, prior to and independent of any specific military context — establishing a principle of reciprocity between human effort and divine guidance that recurs throughout Islamic ethical literature.

Surah ar-Rum: prophecy, providence, and the "signs" of nature

Surah ar-Rum opens with the juz's most historically anchored passage:

"The Byzantines have been defeated in the nearest land. But they, after their defeat, will overcome within three to nine years. To Allah belongs the command before and after. And that day the believers will rejoice." (30:2–4)

This passage carries an unusually well-documented occasion of revelation. Around 614 CE, news reached Mecca that the Sasanid Persian empire had inflicted a major defeat on Byzantine Rome. Because the Meccan polytheists identified, religiously and politically, with the fire-worshipping Persians against the "People of the Book" Byzantines — whom the nascent Muslim community felt naturally closer to as fellow monotheists — the Meccans reportedly used Persia's victory to taunt the Muslims. The Qur'an's response predicted a Byzantine reversal within a stated span of years (bid' sinin, conventionally rendered "three to nine years"). Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Qurtubi transmit a report of a wager, associated in some accounts with Abu Bakr and the Meccan polytheist Ubayy ibn Khalaf, said to have been staked on the outcome; a version of this report appears in al-Tirmidhi's Jami' and is graded hasan by some traditionists, though the precise terms of the stake and its chronology are treated with some caution even within the classical sources. Compounding the textual interest, commentators note a variant reading affecting the second verb: alongside "ghulibat" (they were defeated), some reciters transmitted "sa-yaghlibuna," a form altering whether the Byzantines' eventual victory is described as a near-certainty or a simple prediction — a point of qira'at discussed by both Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi. Byzantine fortunes did indeed reverse under Heraclius within roughly the relevant window, a correspondence the traditional exegesis treats as a confirmed prophecy. Modern historical-critical treatments, including some polemical discussions, have questioned the precision of the timeframe or the reading variants, while most historians of the period accept the underlying historical framework — a Persian conquest of Byzantine territory followed by a Heraclian reversal — as well established, differing chiefly on how tightly the "three to nine years" language should be pressed.

The remainder of ar-Rum pivots from this singular historical anchor to a sustained argumentative pattern that scholars of the Qur'an's Meccan corpus, including Nicolai Sinai, have identified as central to the text's

persuasive strategy: moving from observable phenomena — creation, sleep, the diversity of human languages and skin colors, the mating of spouses, rain reviving dead earth — toward the reasonableness of both tawhid and bodily resurrection. Verse 8 asks whether hearers have not "thought within themselves" about the fact that God created the heavens and earth and everything between them "in truth" and for a specified term, chiding those who deny the meeting with their Lord. This "signs" material culminates in one of the Qur'an's most frequently cited verses on human relationships:

"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought." (30:21)

Az-Zamakhshari's rhetorical analysis of this verse emphasizes that the pairing of mawadda (affection) and rahma (mercy) is not redundant but deliberately complementary — mawadda denoting the ardor and attraction proper to spousal love, rahma denoting the compassion that sustains a bond through hardship, illness, or old age when passion alone might not. This reading has been repeated widely in later commentary and remains a touchstone in Muslim discourse on marriage.

The chapter's other landmark verse addresses human nature directly:

"So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know." (30:30)

The concept of fitrah — an innate, pre-reflective disposition toward monotheism and moral discernment — has become one of the most philosophically productive terms in Qur'anic anthropology. Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading of the Qur'an treats this verse, alongside the Luqman pericope that follows in the next surah, as central to reconstructing a Qur'anic ethics grounded in human nature rather than in legal particulars alone — a useful counterweight, in his view, to more atomistic verse-by-verse treatments in the classical tradition. Ibn 'Ashur's al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir situates this entire "signs" strategy — running through ar-Rum and continuing into Luqman — within a broader Meccan rhetorical program that

argues systematically from cosmic order to tawhid, a reading he develops more explicitly than earlier atomistic commentators had. Angelika Neuwirth's chronological-literary approach similarly locates these surahs within a middle-to-late Meccan trajectory moving from purely cosmological argument toward increasingly explicit engagement with the People of the Book, a trajectory she and others trace forward into the early Medinan material that appears later in this same juz' with al-Ahzab.

The surah closes with a verse of striking ethical-ecological resonance, frequently invoked in modern discussions of the Qur'an and environmental responsibility: "Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned" (30:41), tying moral and material disorder to human agency, before the surah ends with exhortations to patience in the face of the disbelievers' obstinacy.

Surah Luqman: wisdom, warning, and filial duty

Luqman opens by praising the Qur'an itself as "wise" (al-hakim) and guidance for the doers of good, before pivoting to a warning:

"And of the people is he who purchases idle talk to mislead [others] from the way of Allah without knowledge and who takes it in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment." (31:6)

Several tafsir works, transmitting reports traced to Ibn 'Abbas via al-Tabari and repeated by Ibn Kathir, associate this verse with al-Nadr ibn al-Harith, a Meccan reported to have purchased Persian tales and stories specifically to distract audiences from the Qur'an's recitation. This attribution, while widely repeated, is not universally verified with a fully sound chain, and is best treated as a plausible but not certain occasion of revelation.

The surah's center of gravity, however, is its extended pericope on Luqman, a figure the Qur'an presents as a recipient of hikma (wisdom) rather than of prophecy as such. Classical exegetes, following the majority position transmitted from Ibn 'Abbas through al-Tabari and repeated by al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir, hold that Luqman was a righteous, divinely-inspired sage rather than a prophet — a distinction with real theological stakes, since it allows the Qur'an to cite non-prophetic wisdom literature approvingly while

preserving the closed category of prophethood. This section rewards close, near verse-by-verse reading, since each line of Luqman's counsel to his son functions as a discrete ethical unit:

"And [mention, O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, 'O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah in worship. Indeed, association [with Him] is great injustice.'" (31:13)

The prohibition of shirk is placed first and is framed not merely as theological error but as zulm 'azim — a "great injustice," language that recurs throughout the Qur'an to characterize idolatry as a wrong done, ultimately, against the self. Immediately after this paternal admonition, the Qur'an inserts its own voice in a striking parenthetical aside, shifting from Luqman's speech to direct divine address:

"And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination." (31:14)

The juxtaposition is deliberate: a warning against shirk is immediately followed by a command to honor parents, establishing filial gratitude as second only to the prohibition on associating partners with God, while still subordinating parental claims to obedience toward God when the two conflict (a qualification made explicit in the following verse, not quoted here, regarding a parent who commands disbelief).

The pericope continues with Luqman's own further counsel, forming a tightly compact ethical unit well suited to verse-by-verse treatment:

"O my son, indeed if wrongdoing should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or within the heavens or within the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Aware." (31:16)

This verse teaches the exhaustive precision of divine reckoning — no deed, however minute or however concealed, escapes account. It is followed by concrete instruction:

"O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination." (31:17)

and by counsel on comportment:

"And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people, and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone who is self-deluded and boastful. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys." (31:18–19)

The vivid closing simile — likening a raised, boastful voice to a braying donkey — is characteristic of the Qur'an's rhetorical willingness to deploy homely, even unflattering imagery to drive home an ethical point, and this passage has long served didactic functions in Muslim pedagogy for children, precisely because of its combination of theological weight and memorable concreteness.

The surah closes, like ar-Rum, with further "signs" material — ships sailing by God's favor, mountains as stabilizers of the earth — before ending on a verse enumerating matters of exclusively divine knowledge:

"Indeed, Allah has knowledge of the Hour and sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs. And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." (31:34)

These five matters — the Hour, rainfall, the contents of wombs, tomorrow's earnings, and the place of death — are elaborated in the well-known Hadith of Jibril preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, in which these same five unseen matters are cited by the Prophet as known exclusively to God, forming one of the clearer instances in this juz' of direct correspondence between Qur'anic text and canonical hadith exposition.

Surah as-Sajdah: creation, judgment, and night prayer

As-Sajdah is short but doctrinally dense. It opens by reaffirming the divine origin of the revelation against charges of fabrication, then states its central theological claim:

"It is Allah who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days; then He established Himself above the Throne. You have not besides Him any protector or any intercessor; so will you not be reminded?" (32:4)

This verse situates the chapter within the Qur'an's recurring cosmological argument: the same God who ordered creation over six "days" (ayyam, a term commentators generally do not read as ordinary solar days) and who governs from the Throne (al-'arsh) admits no rival protector or intercessor, a direct challenge to the intercessory intermediaries of Meccan polytheism.

The chapter's most devotionally influential verse follows in its middle section, describing believers who rise at night for voluntary prayer:

"Their sides forsake their beds, and they invoke their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend." (32:16)

This verse is one of the Qur'an's principal textual anchors for the practice of qiyam al-layl or tahajjud, voluntary night prayer, and is widely linked in hadith commentary to reports in Sahih Muslim and elsewhere praising nocturnal devotion as a distinguishing mark of the righteous. While some tafsir works associate the verse's revelation with particular Companions known for such practice, the precise chain for a specific occasion of revelation is not firmly established, and the verse is generally treated as descriptive of a virtuous type rather than tied to one incident.

The surah's earlier verses also return briefly to narrative material, contrasting the fate of the disbelieving deniers with that of the believers (32:18–22) in a short passage on ultimate recompense before the chapter turns, in its closing section, to Moses as a point of comparison: "And We had certainly given Moses the Scripture, so do not be in doubt about his meeting" (32:23), invoking the Israelites' reception of an earlier revelation as a precedent for the guidance now given to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's community. The surah then warns the disbelievers of a decisive

day — language some commentators connect, though not with full certainty, to the Battle of Badr as the "conquest" anticipated for the deniers — before closing on a final call to patience and reliance on divine judgment.

Surah al-Ahzab: crisis, reform, and the Prophet's household (33:1–30)

The juz' concludes with the opening third of a Medinan surah whose concerns are markedly different in kind from the Meccan material preceding it: concrete legal reform and a specific, well-documented military crisis. The surah opens by addressing the Prophet directly amid pressure from "the disbelievers and the hypocrites" (33:1), urging steadfast reliance on revelation already given, before moving swiftly into a cluster of social-legal reforms.

The first of these concerns the legal fiction of adoption:

"Allah has not made for a man two hearts in his interior... And He has not made your adopted sons your [true] sons. That is [merely] your saying by your mouths, but Allah says the truth, and He guides to the [right] way. Call them by [the names of] their fathers; it is more just in the sight of Allah..." (33:4–5, summarized)

This passage is directly tied to the case of Zayd ibn Haritha, the Prophet's freedman, who prior to this revelation had been known as "Zayd ibn Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him" under the pre-Islamic convention that adoption conferred the full legal status of biological sonship, including inheritance rights and marriage prohibitions. Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and al-Qurtubi report that pre-Islamic Arabs treated adopted sons as genuine kin for these purposes, and that this passage abrogates that practice, directing that adopted children be called after their biological fathers instead. Read academically, this reform is frequently discussed in scholarship on early Islamic kinship and law as significant evidence of the Qur'an's role in restructuring pre-Islamic Arabian inheritance and family norms, independent of the further narrative it sets up. That further narrative — the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab bint Jahsh following her divorce from Zayd, addressed explicitly at 33:37 — falls just beyond this juz's boundary and belongs properly to the next chapter's treatment, but the legal groundwork for that

episode is laid here, and the two passages are treated by classical commentators as a single connected thread.

The chapter then turns to the status of the Prophet's wives:

"The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves, and his wives are their mothers..." (33:6)

Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir discuss the juristic implications of this designation — principally that it renders marriage to any of the Prophet's wives after his death permanently forbidden to the believers, by analogy with the prohibition on marrying one's own mother — while noting that classical jurists debated and generally denied that the verse extends full maternal inheritance rights to the wives themselves, a distinction that shows the term "mothers" functioning here in a specific legal-honorific sense rather than as a wholesale extension of maternal law.

The bulk of the remaining material in this portion of al-Ahzab narrates the Battle of the Confederates (al-Ahzab) or Trench (al-Khandaq), fought in 5 AH/627 CE, one of the most concretely documented correspondences between Qur'anic text and sira narrative anywhere in the corpus. Ibn Kathir's treatment draws heavily on Ibn Ishaq's account: a coalition of Meccan Quraysh and allied tribes besieged Medina, and the Muslims, on Salman al-Farisi's suggestion (a Persian convert whose proposal reflected Persian siege-warfare practice unfamiliar to the Arabs), dug a defensive trench around the exposed portions of the city. The Qur'an describes the psychological toll of the siege in vivid terms:

"When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when eyes shifted [in fear], and hearts reached the throats, and you assumed about Allah [various] assumptions. There, the believers were tested and shaken with a severe shaking." (33:10–11)

This passage is treated by both sira authors and exegetes as a direct, unembellished description of the fear and disorientation experienced during the siege, including the strain that led some — described in the following verses (33:12–13) — to voice doubt or seek pretexts to withdraw, a wavering

the Qur'an attributes explicitly to "those in whose hearts is disease," generally identified with the hypocrites (munafiqun) of Medina.

Amid this crisis the surah offers its most enduring statement on prophetic exemplarity:

"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often." (33:21)

Revealed in the immediate context of the Trench, this verse is the locus classicus for the concept of uswah hasanah — the Prophet's conduct as a model pattern of life — a concept that has proven foundational well beyond its immediate military occasion, informing later Muslim ethical and devotional literature broadly. Its placement here, amid an account of fear, hardship, and wavering loyalty, underscores that the "excellent pattern" being commended is specifically one of steadfastness under duress.

Steadfastness is given further concrete illustration in the next verses:

"Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [their commitment] in the least." (33:23)

A hadith preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari identifies Anas ibn al-Nadr as among those the verse describes, recounting his vow after missing the Battle of Badr and his subsequent martyrdom at Uhud. It should be noted that this identification is tied more directly, chronologically, to Uhud than to the Ahzab context in which the verse appears; the verse is best understood as praising a general type of unwavering commitment, of which Anas ibn al-Nadr's conduct — pre-dating the Trench itself — serves as an illustrative rather than strictly originating example.

The section reaches its narrative resolution with God's intervention on the Muslims' behalf:

"O you who have believed, remember the favor of Allah upon you when armies came to you and We sent upon them a wind and armies [of angels] you did not see..." (33:9)

Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim preserve extensive hadith detail on the episode, including the eventual dispersal of the confederate armies attributed to a providential windstorm that overturned tents and extinguished cooking fires, breaking the coalition's resolve and leading to its withdrawal without a decisive pitched battle. This juz' closes at verse 30, with the beginning of address to the Prophet's wives regarding the choice between worldly life and steadfast partnership with him — a passage whose fuller elaboration (verses 28–34) extends just past this juz's formal boundary but whose opening belongs here as a transition into the domestic legislation that follows in the next portion of the surah.

Synthesis

Juz' Twenty-One traces an arc from consolation to construction. Its Meccan material — the close of al-'Ankabut, the whole of ar-Rum, Luqman, and as-Sajdah — pursues a unified strategy that scholars such as Neuwirth, Sinai, and Ibn 'Ashur have each, in their own idioms, described as an argument from the observable order of nature (creation, marriage, sleep, ships, rain) toward the reasonableness of monotheism, resurrection, and ethical seriousness, all addressed to a Muslim community still enduring marginalization and mockery in Mecca. Within that arc, a historically specific prophecy (the Byzantine reversal of 30:2–4) anchors the abstract argument in a datable geopolitical event, while the Luqman pericope grounds cosmic argument in intimate household ethics — the prohibition of shirk paired immediately with filial gratitude, and practical counsel on prayer, patience, and humility. The transition to al-Ahzab then relocates the reader from Mecca to Medina and from contemplation to crisis: the abrogation of fictive adoption-kinship, the honorific and legal elevation of the Prophet's wives as "Mothers of the Believers," and the harrowing narrative of the siege of the Trench together illustrate a community now tasked with translating theological conviction into concrete social and military reality. The juz' as a whole thus moves from teaching a community how to see the world rightly to

teaching that same community how to survive, reorganize, and endure together within it.

Juz’ 22: Surah al-Ahzab 33:31 — Surah Ya-Sin 36:27

Surah al-Ahzab 33:31 through Surah Ya-Sin 36:27

Juz' 22 spans the closing third of Sūrat al-Aḥzāb, the whole of Sūrat Saba' and Sūrat Fāṭir, and the opening quarter of Sūrat Yā-Sīn—a stretch that moves from intimate Medinan household legislation to sweeping Meccan cosmological argument and back again to a tightly compressed Meccan oath-and-parable sequence. The juz' is thus markedly heterogeneous: Medinan household legislation gives way, within a few pages, to Meccan polemic against idolatry and resurrection-denial, a juxtaposition that itself illustrates the muṣḥaf's non-chronological arrangement and rewards attention to each unit's distinct historical and rhetorical register.

Sūrat al-Aḥzāb 33:31–34: The Station and Instruction of the Prophet's Wives

The juz' begins mid-passage, in a block addressed to the Ummahāt al-Muʾminīn ("Mothers of the Believers"). The preceding verses (outside this juz') had warned the wives that any grave misconduct on their part would be doubly punished, given their heightened public station; conversely, obedience carries double reward. Verses 31–34 continue in this vein, instructing the wives toward domestic composure, reciting to them, "and remain in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance" (33:33), before turning to the establishment of prayer, the giving of zakāh, and obedience to God and His Messenger.

The pivotal clause follows immediately: "Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification" (33:33). This is the so-called Āyat al-Taṭhīr, one of the most interpretively contested verses in the Qur'an. Ibn Kathīr, reading it within its immediate grammatical and contextual frame—embedded in a passage of feminine plural address to the Prophet's wives—inclines toward including those wives among the referents of "the people of the house" (ahl al-bayt), while also citing the well-attested hadith of the cloak (ḥadīth al-kisāʾ, preserved in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim), in which the Prophet gathered ʿAlī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn beneath his mantle and prayed that impurity be removed from them, extending the verse's reference

to this narrower family circle as well. This divergence—between a reading anchored in immediate grammatical context (favoring the wives) and one anchored in prophetic practice and application (favoring the kisāʾ household)—constitutes one of the most consequential points of Sunni-Shīʿī exegetical difference in the entire Qur'an, bound up with distinct doctrines of the Imamate and of ahl al-bayt's spiritual authority. A neutral academic presentation notes both readings without adjudicating between them: many Sunni exegetes, including Ibn Kathīr, in fact affirm both referents together—the wives by immediate context, the kisāʾ family by hadith-attested extension—while Shīʿī exegesis emphasizes the latter as primary or exclusive.

Q33:35: The Ten Paired Virtues

A distinct rhetorical unit follows, listing in balanced grammatical parallelism ten qualities shared identically by believing men and women: submission (islām), faith (īmān), obedience, truthfulness, patience, humility, charity, fasting, guarding one's chastity, and frequent remembrance of God—"for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward." Exegetical tradition, as transmitted in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, links the verse's revelation to a question posed by a Companion woman—commonly identified as Umm Salama, though other reports name different questioners—asking why the Qur'an's address seemed to favor men. Because the reports vary in their named questioner, this is better treated as a cluster of asbāb al-nuzūl traditions converging on a single concern than as a fixed historical occasion. The verse is frequently invoked in discussions of gender and Qur'anic address, since its ten-fold parallel structure explicitly extends every named virtue to both sexes without qualification.

Q33:36–48: The Zaynab bint Jaḥsh Affair and the Reform of Adoption

This is the most historically anchored and exegetically substantial passage of the juz'. The narrative concerns Zaynab bint Jaḥsh, a cousin of the Prophet, who had been married to Zayd ibn Ḥāritha, the Prophet's freedman and adopted son. The marriage proved unhappy; verse 37 recalls the Prophet's private discomfort: "when you said to the one on whom Allah bestowed favor and you bestowed favor, 'Keep your wife and fear Allah,' while you concealed

within yourself that which Allah is to disclose... So when Zayd had no more need for her, We married her to you in order that there not be upon the believers any discomfort concerning the wives of their adopted sons." Both al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr treat this narrative with notable caution, explicitly rejecting reports—circulating in some early exegetical layers and often traced to isrāʾīliyyāt influence—that claimed the Prophet had been struck by Zaynab's beauty upon an inadvertent glimpse and thereby harbored improper desire before the divorce. Ibn Kathīr regards such reports as unreliable and inconsistent with prophetic character, insisting instead that the verse's legal-theological purpose is narrower and more clearly stated in the text itself: to abolish the pre-Islamic Arabian legal fiction (tabannī) by which an adopted son was assimilated to a biological son (nasab) for purposes of inheritance and, crucially, marriage prohibition. The Prophet's marriage to his adopted son's former wife functioned as a living demonstration that adoption creates no blood tie and therefore no marriage impediment—a point the surah makes explicit shortly after: "Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him is not the father of [any] one of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and last of the prophets" (33:40).

This verse, khātam al-nabiyyīn, carries a second theological freight beyond the adoption question: it asserts Muḥammad's status as the final prophet, foundational to later Islamic doctrine regarding the closure of prophecy. Az-Zamakhsharī's grammatical treatment reads khātam as functioning like a seal that closes a document—here, closing the sequence of prophethood definitively. Some modern academic discussion of the semantic range of khātam an-nabiyyīn—arising largely in interfaith and intra-Islamic polemical contexts—has floated readings of "seal" as ratification or exemplary confirmation rather than strict temporal finality, but this remains a minority position against the overwhelming classical and mainstream consensus reading it as finality. It is presented here as a genuinely contested point in modern scholarly and interfaith discussion, distinct from the settled classical position.

The wider passage (33:36–48) continues with further material on the Prophet's marriages and prophetic office, framed throughout as address correcting Medinan social anxieties over the Zaynab marriage, and

culminates in verses of praise: "Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace" (33:56). This verse underlies the Islamic liturgical practice of ṣalāt ʿalā al-nabī (invoking blessings upon Muḥammad), a practice tradition connects—through hadith reports attributed to Companions including Ubayy ibn Kaʿb—to questions raised at the time of revelation about how such blessing should be performed, though these reports vary in strength across the collections.

Q33:49–58: Prophetic Privileges and Household Etiquette

A cluster of rulings follows concerning divorce prior to consummation (verse 49) and then a set of marital dispensations explicitly restricted to the Prophet himself—waiver of the customary dower in certain cases, absence of the four-wife limit otherwise binding on believers, and related provisions. Classical jurisprudence, reflected for instance in al-Qurṭubī's legal commentary, categorizes these as khuṣūṣiyyāt al-nabī, rulings peculiar to prophetic office and not extendable by analogy to the general community—a hermeneutical principle recurrent throughout fiqh discussions of the Prophet's biography.

Verses 53–58 turn to etiquette for visiting the Prophet's household: guests are instructed not to enter without invitation, not to linger in conversation after eating, and to address his wives "from behind a screen" (min warāʾi ḥijāb)—the so-called hijab verse in its strict legal sense of a partition regulating interaction with the Prophet's wives specifically, distinguished by exegetes from the general modesty legislation of verse 59. Tafsīr literature associates this passage with an incident at a wedding banquet in the Prophet's own house—conventionally linked to his marriage to Zaynab—where guests overstayed after the meal, prompting the revelation; some reports credit ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb with having earlier expressed the wish that such a regulation be revealed. Like many asbāb reports, the precise circumstantiality of this occasion-narrative should be held with appropriate caution even as its general setting is well attested. The passage closes with a prohibition on ever marrying the Prophet's widows and a severe warning against those who cause him harm.

Q33:59–62: The Jilbāb Verse and Warnings to Hypocrites

Distinct from the household-specific hijab regulation, verse 59 addresses believing women in general: "O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused." Al-Qurṭubī treats this jilbāb verse as a foundational fiqh text on women's dress, distinguishing its general address (to "women of the believers") from the household-specific hijab legislation of verse 53. The reported occasion of revelation concerns harassment of Muslim women on the streets of Medina by men unable—or unwilling—to distinguish free Muslim women from others; the outer garment served as a visible mark of identity and a measure of protection. The passage transitions immediately into warning against hypocrites and rumor-mongers active in Medina, a period of documented social tension, though the specific incidents behind verses 60–62 are less firmly anchored in the sources than the jilbāb occasion itself.

Q33:63–73: Eschatological Close and the Trust

The surah's final movement shifts register entirely, addressing questions about the Hour, the mutual disowning between misguided leaders and their followers in the Fire, and a brief allusion to those who "harmed Moses" as a cautionary parallel to those harming the Prophet. The surah then closes with one of the Qur'an's most striking cosmological images: "Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant" (33:72). The amānah (Trust) here is generally read by exegetes as moral responsibility and free agency—the capacity, unique among creation, to accept or reject divine command, and hence liability to real accountability. Its position as the surah's closing verse gives it a summary, almost hinge-like function: the household legislation, prophetic biography, and social regulation preceding it are folded back into a single anthropological claim about human moral capacity and its attendant risk.

Sūrat Saba' (34): Solomon, the People of Sheba, and the Sunnat Allah of Ingratitude

The juz' now turns to a complete Meccan surah, structurally and thematically distinct from the Medinan legislation preceding it. Sūrat Saba' opens with praise of God's comprehensive knowledge and control over creation, then narrates Solomon's dominion over the wind and the jinn, who labor for him "with the permission of his Lord," until his death is discovered when his body, propped upright on his staff, finally falls—an episode exegetes cite to illustrate that even the jinn, popularly credited with hidden knowledge, did not perceive his death until a worm had eaten through the staff supporting him.

The surah's centerpiece narrative concerns the people of Saba' (Sheba), rehearsed at verse 15: "There was for [the tribe of] Saba' in their dwelling place a sign: two [fields of] gardens on the right and on the left... but they turned away [from obedience]," after which God "sent upon them the flood of the dam (sayl al-ʿarim)" and transformed their fertile gardens into a landscape of bitter fruit, tamarisk, and sparse lote trees (34:15–17). Ibn Kathīr elaborates this as the historical—if partly legendary in its transmitted details—account of the bursting of the Maʾrib dam in pre-Islamic South Arabia, drawing on early exegetical lore about the region's agricultural prosperity and its collapse. The passage functions programmatically as a case study in ingratitude (kufr al-niʿma) leading to the withdrawal of divine favor; Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading treats this narrative not primarily as historical reportage but as an instance of the Qur'an's recurring sunnat Allāh motif—God's constant pattern of dealing with nations according to their moral and spiritual conduct—a functional-theological reading distinguishable from, though not necessarily opposed to, the classical tafsīr tendency to historicize the account.

The surah continues with polemic against the Meccan deniers of resurrection and a sustained refutation of intercession claims made on behalf of idols, insisting that whatever is worshipped besides God possesses no share in the heavens or earth and no power of intercession except by God's permission. Structurally, Saba' thus moves from prophetic narrative (Solomon, Saba') to eschatological argument to polemic against shirk, a sequence broadly characteristic of the middle-to-late Meccan surahs in chronological scholarship building on the Nöldeke-Schwally framework as later refined.

Sūrat Fāṭir (35): The Angels, Creation, and the Fate of the Misguided

The following surah, also called al-Malāʾika ("The Angels") after its opening reference, begins: "[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, [who] made the angels messengers having wings, two or three or four. He increases in creation what He wills" (35:1). Ibn ʿĀshūr's al-Taḥrīr wa'l-Tanwīr situates this opening within a broader Meccan rhetorical strategy: establishing tawḥīd (divine oneness) through cosmological argument—here, the diversity and function of angelic messengers and of created forms generally—before the surah proceeds to its polemic against shirk in later verses. The surah develops a series of contrasts: between the guided and the misguided, between those who purify themselves and those who persist in disbelief, between the transience of worldly adornment and the enduring reality of resurrection. It reiterates the impossibility of one soul bearing another's burden, refutes the efficacy of interceding idols, and closes with warnings about the brevity of worldly life set against certain reckoning—consistent with the eschatological urgency typical of Meccan revelation aimed at an audience resistant to belief in bodily resurrection.

Sūrat Yā-Sīn 36:1–27: Oath, Sealed Hearts, and the Parable of the Messengers

The juz' closes with the opening segment of Sūrat Yā-Sīn, a surah of particular devotional prominence in later Muslim practice. It opens with the disjointed letters Yā-Sīn, followed by an oath upon "the wise Qur'an" affirming Muḥammad's status among "the messengers, on a straight path," sent down "that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, so they are heedless." Angelika Neuwirth's chronological-literary approach treats Yā-Sīn as an earlier Meccan surah exhibiting a tightly compact rhetorical architecture—oath-cluster, followed by parable, then cosmological sign-passage, then eschatological finale—a structural economy she contrasts instructively with the far more discursive, legally elaborated Medinan material of Sūrat al-Aḥzāb found earlier in this same juz', underscoring how differently Meccan and Medinan revelation operate rhetorically even within a single bound volume.

Verses 8–10 describe the obstinate as bound by "shackles" up to their chins and blinded before and behind them, such that warning makes no difference to them—imagery generally read as describing self-imposed spiritual blindness rather than literal restraint, consistent with the surah's broader theme of hearts sealed against guidance through persistent rejection. Verse 12 then states a foundational doctrine of divine omniscience and recompense: "Indeed, it is We who bring the dead to life and record what they have put forth and what they left behind, and all things We have enumerated in a clear register (imām mubīn)." This verse is frequently cited in theological discussions of divine knowledge and the comprehensive heavenly record of human deeds, functioning as a doctrinal anchor for the surah's subsequent narrative illustration.

That illustration follows immediately in the parable of Aṣḥāb al-Qarya, "the companions of the town" (36:13–27): God sent messengers to a town whose inhabitants rejected them, deeming them mere mortals and ill omens. Reinforced by a third messenger, the emissaries persisted, but the townspeople threatened them with stoning. At this point "there came from the farthest end of the city a man, running," urging his people: "O my people, follow the messengers. Follow those who ask of you no payment, and they are [rightly] guided" (36:20–21). This anonymous believer, reportedly killed by his own people for his advocacy, is nonetheless received into Paradise, exclaiming his wish that his people knew of the forgiveness and honor granted him. Ibn Kathīr, citing reports transmitted through Ibn Isḥāq and Ibn ʿAbbās of varying chain-strength, identifies the town with Antioch (Anṭākiya) and names the believing man Ḥabīb al-Najjār, while explicitly flagging the uncertain or weak provenance of some of these identifying reports—material accordingly better read as exegetical tradition than as established historical fact. The parable's function within the surah is didactic: it exemplifies steadfast, disinterested prophetic advocacy (messengers who "ask of you no payment") met with hostility, yet vindicated by divine reward, a pattern recognizable across the Qur'an's broader corpus of rejected-messenger narratives.

It is worth noting, in connection with Yā-Sīn's devotional reputation, that many of its circulating virtue-traditions—including the widely repeated

saying that "Yā-Sīn is the heart of the Qur'an" and traditions recommending its recitation over the dying—are commonly assessed by hadith critics as weak (ḍaʿīf) or of disputed authenticity, a judgment reflected in various specialist hadith-verification resources. This represents a notable instance where popular devotional practice has outpaced the hadith-critical assessment of its textual basis, a divergence worth registering evenhandedly rather than adjudicating in either direction.

Synthesis

Juz' 22 thus moves across three distinct registers within a single continuous reading unit: the household and legal legislation concluding Sūrat al-Aḥzāb, anchored in specific, datable Medinan circumstances—the Zaynab-Zayd marriage and the reform of adoption law, the regulation of visits to the Prophet's house, and street-level protections for Muslim women—all threaded through with theologically weighted verses (the purification and seal-of-prophethood verses) whose interpretation carries consequences well beyond their immediate legal occasion; the sweeping Meccan cosmological and historical argumentation of Saba' and Fāṭir, oriented toward establishing divine oneness and warning against ingratitude and idolatry through narrative exempla (Solomon, the Sheba flood) and creation-based rhetoric; and the compact, oath-driven opening of Yā-Sīn, whose sealed-hearts imagery, doctrine of the comprehensive divine register, and parable of the anonymous believer condense the juz's recurring concerns—divine knowledge, human moral responsibility, and the vindication of sincere faith against communal rejection—into a tightly wound rhetorical unit that carries forward into the remainder of the surah in the following juz'. Across all three registers, the juz' repeatedly returns to a single anthropological claim first stated explicitly at 33:72: that human beings alone among creation have assumed a Trust entailing real moral accountability, a claim that quietly underwrites both the household legislation of the Aḥzāb material and the prophetic narratives of Saba', Fāṭir, and Yā-Sīn alike.

Juz’ 23: Surah Ya-Sin 36:28 — Surah az-Zumar 39:31

Surah Ya-Sin 36:28 through Surah az-Zumar 39:31

Juz' 23 opens midway through Surah Ya-Sin and carries the reader through the whole of two densely narrative, oath-laden Meccan suras—as-Saffat and Sad—before concluding with the opening movement of az-Zumar. Thematically the juz' is bound together by a sustained argument for resurrection and divine oneness (tawhid), pursued through three complementary registers: natural "signs" (ayat) drawn from cosmology and agriculture, prophetic case histories (Ibrahim, Nuh, Musa, Dawud, Sulayman, Ayyub, and others) illustrating trial, obedience, and repentance, and direct eschatological description of the Last Day. Running beneath all of this is a polemical engagement with Meccan skepticism about bodily resurrection and with the practice of seeking intercessors besides God—concerns that reach a kind of summation in az-Zumar's opening call to sincere, undivided devotion (ikhlas).

Ya-Sin 36:28–32: the fate of the disbelieving town

The juz' begins in the middle of the parable, familiar from the surah's preceding verses, of a town that rejected messengers sent to it and of a lone believer—identified in the exegetical tradition, per Ibn Kathir, with a figure named Habib al-Najjar, a craftsman of Antioch—who urged his people to heed the messengers and was killed for it. Ibn Kathir treats this identification cautiously, as inherited narrative material (qisas) rather than confirmed history, and no formal asbab al-nuzul report ties the passage to a specific Meccan incident; it functions as parable. The juz' opens on the sequel: "And We did not send down upon his people after him any host from the heaven, nor were We to send down. It was not but one shout, and immediately they were extinguished" (36:28–29). The rhetorical point is economy: no cosmic army was needed to punish the town, only a single sayha (blast or cry). Verse 36:30 turns this into a direct address—"How regretful for the servants: there did not come to them a messenger except that they used to ridicule him"—generalizing the local narrative into a standing indictment of humanity's habitual mockery of prophets, and 36:31–32 note that God has destroyed many such generations before, none of whom will return, "and

indeed, all of them, all together, brought before Us" for judgment—already anticipating the surah's central resurrection theme.

Ya-Sin 36:33–35: the sign of the dead earth

This is among the most frequently cited "signs" passages in the Qur'an and merits close attention. "And a sign for them is the dead earth. We have brought it to life and brought forth from it grain, and from it they eat. And We placed therein gardens of palm trees and grapevines and caused to burst forth therefrom some springs—that they may eat of His fruit. And their hands have not produced it, so will they not be grateful?" The argument proceeds by analogy: if lifeless soil (al-ard al-mayta) can be revivified and made productive, the revivification of dead bodies at resurrection is not a greater marvel in kind, only in scale. The verse's closing clause—"and their hands have not produced it"—makes a subsidiary point about human dependence: agricultural abundance, though it requires human labor, is not ultimately a human achievement but a divine gift, and gratitude (shukr) is the fitting response. This pairing of a physical sign with a demand for gratitude is a recurring structural device in the Qur'an's Meccan "sign" pericopes, and some scholars of Qur'anic form have noted that Ya-Sin's cluster of signs in this stretch (36:33–44) follows a recognizable formulaic pattern found across Meccan suras—naming a phenomenon, drawing a theological inference, and closing with a rhetorical question or exhortation.

Ya-Sin 36:36: the theme of pairs

"Exalted is He who created all pairs—from what the earth grows and from themselves and from that which they do not know." This verse, brief but doctrinally significant, extends the notion of created pairs (azwaj) beyond the male-female dimorphism of humans and plants to "that which they do not know," a phrase later exegetes and modern apologetic writers have sometimes connected to purely theoretical or as-yet-undiscovered forms of duality in nature; classical exegesis is more restrained, generally reading it as an assertion of God's comprehensive knowledge and creative power extending beyond human perception, without specifying content.

Ya-Sin 36:38–40: sun, moon, and orbit

This triad of verses has drawn sustained attention across both the classical and modern periods. "And the sun runs [on course] toward its stopping point (mustaqarr). That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing. And the moon—We have determined for it phases, until it returns [appearing] like the old date stalk. It is not allowable (la yanbaghi) for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit (falak), is swimming." Al-Tabari's Jami' al-Bayan records a genuine divergence among early exegetes over mustaqarr: some understood it as the sun's daily terminus (its setting point, recurring each day), others as its ultimate cessation at the end of time, when its motion will stop altogether. Al-Tabari does not adjudicate decisively between these readings but presents both as attested among the early authorities, which is itself instructive about the interpretive openness of the verse in the formative period of tafsir. The phrase la yanbaghi ("it is not fitting," "it is not possible") in verse 39 has occasioned discussion of whether the impossibility described is physical/cosmological or more broadly a statement of ordained propriety—that sun and moon each keep to an appointed course by divine decree, such that their courses do not properly overtake one another. The term falak ("orbit," here rendered "swimming" in a rotational sense, yasbahun) has become, in modern scientific-apologetic literature, a frequent point of reference for claims of anticipatory concordance with heliocentric or orbital astronomy; a more historically grounded reading, consistent with the range of classical opinion recorded by al-Tabari, treats the verse primarily as an assertion of cosmic order and divine determination (taqdir) rather than a technical astronomical statement, leaving the precise scientific correlation a matter of ongoing and contested modern discussion rather than settled classical consensus.

Ya-Sin 36:41–54: the ark, mockery of resurrection, and the Trumpet

The following stretch of the surah moves rapidly through several sign-clusters. Verses 36:41–44 cite the ark (Noah's vessel, and by extension seafaring generally) as a sign of divine mercy carrying human progeny over the waters: "And a sign for them is that We carried their forefathers in a laden ship." The passage then turns (36:45–47) to describe disbelievers who, when told to be mindful of what is before and behind them—commonly read

as a warning of both past punishments and the coming Hereafter—turn away, and who mock the practice of charity by asking sarcastically why they should feed one whom God, if He willed, could feed Himself. Verses 36:48–50 record their taunting demand for the promised Hour, answered by God's declaration that the reckoning will overtake them suddenly, in the midst of their ordinary disputes, with no chance to make bequests or return to their families. The passage crescendos in 36:51: "And the Horn will be blown; and at once from the graves to their Lord they will hasten." This is a vivid single-image depiction of the general resurrection, and verses 36:52–54 give voice to the disbelievers' bewildered exclamation ("Who has raised us up from our sleeping place?") answered by the reply that this is what the Most Merciful had promised, and that on that day no soul will be wronged in the slightest, each recompensed only for its deeds.

Ya-Sin 36:55–68: Paradise, the reproach of the wicked, and Satan

The surah then bifurcates into parallel descriptions of the reward of "the companions of Paradise" (36:55–58)—occupied in delight, reclining with their spouses, greeted with the divine salutation "Peace," a word spoken by a Merciful Lord—and the fate of the guilty, addressed directly: "But stand apart today, you criminals" (36:59). Verse 36:60 delivers a pointed rhetorical reproach: "Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan—[for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy—and that you worship [only] Me? This is a straight path." The passage frames the disbelievers' error not merely as intellectual denial but as a species of misplaced worship (worship of Satan through obedience to his enticements) despite ample warning, and 36:63–64 identifies Hell as "the Fire which you were promised" on account of persistent disbelief, into which they are commanded to "burn therein today for what you used to deny."

Ya-Sin 36:65: bodily testimony

"That Day, We will seal over their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify about what they used to earn." This verse is pivotal in the Qur'an's eschatological imagery and has drawn considerable exegetical comment on the semiotics of bodily witness and divine justice: the mouth, the primary organ of speech and thus of denial and false testimony,

is silenced, while the limbs that physically performed the deeds—hands and feet—are given voice to testify against their owner. The theological point commonly drawn is the impossibility of concealment or denial before God, since the testifying agents are not external witnesses subject to bias or deception but the sinner's own body, transformed into an instrument of unimpeachable evidence. This verse is often read alongside parallel passages elsewhere in the Qur'an describing the skin as a witness, reinforcing a broader Qur'anic motif of total bodily accountability at judgment.

Ya-Sin 36:69–83: defense of the Prophet, the argument from bones, and kun fa-yakun

The surah's close addresses a specific charge leveled against Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him—that he was merely a poet (sha'ir), and the Qur'an merely poetry. Verse 36:69 rebuts this: "And We did not give him knowledge of poetry, nor is it befitting for him. It is not but a message and a clear Qur'an." Ibn 'Ashur's al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir reads the surah's overall rhetorical arc—moving from sensory and rational proofs of resurrection toward the ultimate metaphysical proof of the divine creative command—as characteristic of its Meccan argumentative structure aimed specifically at deniers of resurrection, and this closing section exemplifies that movement. Verses 36:77–79 stage a vivid scene: a disbeliever brings a decayed, crumbled bone and challenges, "Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?" The answer given in 36:79 turns the challenge back on the questioner's own origin: "He will give them life who produced them the first time; and He is, of all creation, Knowing." Verse 36:80 adds a further natural analogy—God's ability to produce fire from green trees, reversing the ordinary association of moisture with the absence of fire, as a further sign of the capacity to reverse ordinary expectation. The surah then closes on its most compact and theologically weighty formula, verse 36:82: "His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is." The Arabic kun fa-yakun ("Be, and it is") functions in Islamic theology as the paradigmatic statement of God's creative power operating without intermediary process, instrument, or delay—creation as an act of unmediated divine will rather than physical causation. Verse 36:83 closes the

surah on a doxological note: "So exalted is He in whose hand is the realm of all things, and to Him you will be returned." A widely circulated hadith attributes special virtues to reciting Ya-Sin, found in various forms across hadith literature and popular practice, but scholars have flagged that the specific narrations claiming exclusive or exceptional merit for this surah are, according to later hadith critics, of disputed or weak authenticity, and this area calls for scholarly caution rather than uncritical repetition.

As-Saffat 37:1–11: oaths, the ranked angels, and guarded heavens

Surah as-Saffat opens, characteristically for Meccan suras, with a triad of oath-formulas: "By those [angels] lined up in rows, and those who drive [the clouds], and those who recite the message"—oaths sworn by ranks of angels, invoked (as is typical in Qur'anic oath rhetoric) to lend solemnity to the assertion that follows: "Indeed, your God is One" (37:4). Verses 37:6–10 describe the lowest heaven adorned with stars and the stars themselves employed as a guard against eavesdropping devils (shayatin) who attempt to overhear the heavenly assembly and are driven off by pursuing flame. This passage is frequently read alongside pre-Islamic Arabian beliefs associating shooting stars with attempts by jinn to eavesdrop on celestial secrets, a cosmological motif the Qur'an here incorporates and reframes theologically as divine protection of the heavenly realm from illicit intrusion. Verse 37:11 turns rhetorically to the human creation, asking whether disbelievers are "a stronger creation" than the angels and heavenly bodies just described, or than the rest of what God has created—an a fortiori argument preparing the ground for the extended resurrection polemic that follows.

As-Saffat 37:12–74: mockery of resurrection, the reckoning, and the tree of Zaqqum

This long central stretch, easily overlooked between the surah's cosmological opening and the Ibrahim narrative, carries much of as-Saffat's argumentative weight and deserves its own notice. Verses 37:12–18 record the disbelievers' derisive reaction to warning and their scornful demand, echoed elsewhere in the Meccan corpus, that decayed bones and dust be brought back to life—met with the flat rejoinder that resurrection will come "while they are humiliated." Verses 37:19–21 describe the event as no more than "one

shout," after which the guilty stand bewildered before "the Day of Judgment...which you used to deny." A dialogue of mutual recrimination follows (37:22–33), reminiscent of the parallel scene later in Surah Sad: the wrongdoers and those who misled them are gathered together with their idols and dispute over responsibility, the followers protesting that their leaders approached them "from the right"—commonly read as from the position of trust or apparent good counsel—while the leaders retort that the followers were not themselves believers to begin with, both parties ultimately declared "partners in the punishment" (37:33). Verses 37:35–36 return to the specific charge against the Prophet, noting that when told "there is no deity but Allah," the disbelievers were arrogant, and dismissed the Qur'an as "the words of a mad poet"—a charge the surah's later closing verses will also address in Ya-Sin's vein. The section then turns, in verses 37:40–61, to a sustained contrast between the "chosen servants of Allah" enjoying garden fellowship, secure conversation, and a sealed wine that neither intoxicates nor causes headache, and the tree of Zaqqum (37:62–65), described as growing from the depths of Hellfire with fruit like the heads of devils—food for the people of the Fire that they are made to eat and wash down with scalding water (37:66–67), a stark inversion of the preceding garden-banquet imagery. Verses 37:68–70 attribute this fate to blind adherence to inherited ancestral error, and 37:71–74 note that most earlier peoples likewise went astray despite warners sent among them, "except the sincere servants of Allah"—the recurring exemption of the mukhlasin that threads through the juz' and anticipates az-Zumar's closing theme.

As-Saffat 37:75–98: Ibrahim against astral idolatry

A substantial narrative block recounts episodes from Ibrahim's early life and confrontation with his people's idolatry, introduced by a brief notice of Nuh's earlier deliverance (37:75–82) as a structural parallel—a prior instance of prophetic vindication and communal punishment preceding Ibrahim's own trial. The passage recalls (in verses preceding and around 37:83, "And indeed, among his kind was Ibrahim") his rejection of the worship of stars, sun, and moon in favor of the one Creator, his direct confrontation with his father and people over their idol-worship, his stratagem of breaking the idols and leaving the largest one intact so as to expose their impotence when

questioned, and the people's attempt to punish him by fire. The famous divine intervention—rendering the fire "coolness and safety" for Ibrahim—belongs to this narrative cycle (commonly cited around 37:97–98 depending on verse numbering across editions) and culminates in his emigration from his people. Ibn Kathir and other classical exegetes read this cycle as establishing Ibrahim's credentials as the archetypal hanif, the primordial monotheist whose rejection of ancestral idolatry models the Prophet Muhammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) own confrontation with Meccan polytheism, though the Qur'an does not draw an explicit seerah-linkage here; the connection is typological rather than historically documented.

As-Saffat 37:99–113: the sacrifice narrative (dhabih)

This is the most theologically and historically contested passage in the juz' and merits verse-level attention. Ibrahim, having emigrated, prays for a righteous son (37:100) and is given "a forbearing boy" (ghulam halim, 37:101). Then comes the pivotal dialogue at 37:102: "And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, 'O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think.' He said, 'O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast.'" Al-Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf gives close attention to the rhetorical structure of this exchange—Ibrahim's proposal is not a unilateral divine command imposed on a passive victim but a matter put to the son for his own response, echoed in the son's affirmative, forward-looking answer. Al-Zamakhshari reads the passage as a model of adab, filial etiquette, and mutual consultation (shura) sustained even amid an extreme trial, an ethical reading that can be appreciated independently of the question of the son's identity. Verses 37:103–107 narrate the resolution: both submit ("and when they had both submitted"), Ibrahim lays the son down, and the divine call intervenes: "O Ibrahim, you have fulfilled the vision"—followed by the pivotal ransom verse, 37:107: "And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice (dhibhin azim)." The nature of this "great sacrifice"—commonly understood in the tradition as a ram provided in substitution—underlies the practice of animal sacrifice at Eid al-Adha, though the Qur'anic text itself does not elaborate the substitute's species; that detail derives from exegetical and hadith tradition rather than the Qur'an's own wording.

The identity of the son is the passage's central point of classical and modern scholarly divergence. The Qur'an itself does not name the son within this dhabih pericope; only in verses 37:112–113, following the sacrifice account, is Ishaq named as a subsequent and distinct gift: "And We gave him good tidings of Ishaq, a prophet from among the righteous." Ibn Kathir marshals hadith and companion reports to argue that Isma'il, not Ishaq, was the intended sacrificial son, reasoning in part from the sequencing of the narrative—Ishaq's naming as a separate, later announcement suggests the sacrificed son was the earlier-born Isma'il—and this has become the dominant position in later Islamic tradition. Ibn Kathir notes, however, that the dispute is longstanding among the Salaf, with some Companions and much Isra'iliyyat-derived material favoring Ishaq, a view that is also the standard identification in the Judeo-Christian tradition's parallel account in Genesis 22. Academic comparative scholarship on the Qur'an's engagement with Biblical and para-biblical tradition has treated this divergence as a genuine point of source-critical interest, observing that the Qur'an's narrative both parallels and diverges from the Genesis account in structure and emphasis (notably the son's active, consenting voice, absent from the Genesis version), without the Qur'an's own text resolving the identity question explicitly—a matter that remains genuinely disputed among both classical exegetes and modern scholars alike and should not be presented as settled in either direction.

As-Saffat 37:114–148: Musa, Harun, and Yunus

The surah continues with a compressed sequence of prophetic commendations—Musa and Harun, favored and granted victory, described in verses around 37:114–122 as recipients of "the clear Book" for guidance—followed by brief notice of Ilyas (Elijah) at 37:123–132, whose people are condemned for worshipping Ba'l, and Lut (Lot) at 37:133–138, whose rescue and the destruction of his disbelieving people (all "except an old woman among those who remained behind") is recalled briefly, with a direct address noting that the Meccan audience passes by the ruins of Lut's people "in the morning and by night," an implicit call to observe visible historical warning. The Yunus (Jonah) narrative at 37:139–148 recounts his flight, his casting of lots leading to being thrown from the ship, his being swallowed by the great

fish while blameworthy ("and he was of those who deserved blame," 37:142), his supplication from within the fish's belly, and God's casting him onto a barren shore where a gourd vine was made to grow over him for shelter, followed by his being sent again to a people of a hundred thousand or more who then believed. This sequence functions cumulatively as a survey of prophetic vindication despite hardship, opposition, or personal lapse.

As-Saffat 37:149–182: polemic against angel-daughters and closing doxology

The surah's later verses turn polemical, addressing the Meccan practice of ascribing daughters to God (identifying angels as God's daughters) while the Meccans themselves preferred sons—verses 37:149–157 press this as a logical and moral inconsistency, asking pointedly whether God "chose daughters over sons" or whether the Meccans themselves witnessed the angels' creation. The surah reaffirms bodily resurrection once more (37:158–166, including angelic self-description as ranked in humble service) and, in verses 37:167–170, records the disbelievers' own admission that had they possessed "a remembrance from the former peoples" they would have been God's sincere servants—an admission the text presents as self-indicting, since the Qur'an itself now supplies exactly that remembrance and is met with denial regardless. The surah closes with a doxology at 37:180–182: "Exalted is your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe. And peace upon the messengers. And praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds." This closing has itself become a widely used devotional formula, frequently recited or cited independently as a supplication of praise.

Surah Sad 38:1–16: Meccan obstinacy, past nations, and demand for judgment

Surah Sad opens with an oath by "the Qur'an, containing reminder" (38:1) affirming that the disbelievers are in "opposition and division" despite clear signs. Verses 38:4–8 record the astonishment of the Meccan leadership at the exclusivist monotheistic claim: "Has he made the gods [into] one God? Indeed, this is a curious thing" (38:5), and their leaders' departure with the exhortation to "persevere in [worship of] your gods" (38:6). Several tafsir works, drawing on Sira material transmitted through later compilers such as

Ibn Kathir (tracing back to Ibn Ishaq), link this passage to a specific documented early Meccan episode: a delegation of Quraysh notables pressuring Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle and protector, to restrain Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him from his monotheistic preaching. This underlying historical episode—Quraysh pressure on Abu Talib—is well attested in the Sira literature generally, though the precise claim that this passage (38:1–8) was revealed in direct response to that specific meeting varies among commentators and should be read as a plausible, moderately but not universally attested exegetical linkage rather than a certainty. Verses 38:12–14 briefly catalogue past punished nations as warnings—the people of Nuh, 'Ad, Fir'awn ("owner of the stakes"), Thamud, the people of Lut, and "the companions of the thicket" (Ashab al-Ayka, associated with the people of Madyan)—each of whom "denied the messengers, so My penalty was justly deserved." Verses 38:15–16 turn back to the immediate Meccan audience, describing their fate as a single unanswerable "shout" and quoting their sarcastic demand to be given their "share" of punishment "before the Day of Account"—a taunting impatience for the very judgment the surah is arguing they should fear.

Sad 38:17–26: Dawud's trial and repentance

The surah then turns to David (Dawud), commended as a servant "of might" who turns often to God (38:17), granted mastery over mountains and birds that glorify God with him (38:18–19), and given wisdom and decisive speech (38:20). Verses 38:21–25 narrate the well-known episode of two litigants who climb over the wall of his private chamber to bring a dispute before him: one man complains that his adversary, who owns ninety-nine ewes to his own single ewe, has demanded that single ewe as well and has "overpowered him in speech." Verse 38:24 is pivotal: "[Dawud] said, 'He has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe [in addition] to his ewes... And David became certain that We had tried him, and he asked forgiveness of his Lord, and he fell down bowing [in prostration] and turned in repentance [to Allah]." The precise nature of Dawud's fault—what exactly constituted the "trial" (fitna) here—is left underspecified by the Qur'anic text itself, and this has generated substantial classical theological discussion. Al-Qurtubi's al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an addresses at length whether Dawud's lapse constituted an

actual moral fault or merely khilaf al-awla, a "departure from the more excellent course" rather than sin proper—a distinction serving the broader Ash'ari-Maturidi theological concern to preserve the doctrine of prophetic 'isma (protection from grave sin or error in conveying revelation) while still accounting for the Qur'an's own language of istighfar, seeking forgiveness, which implies some genuine fault requiring repentance. This verse is also the textual basis for a recognized prostration in recitation (sajdat al-tilawa in Surah Sad); hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim report the Prophet's practice of prostrating upon reciting this verse, though jurists have debated—reflected across classical fiqh literature—whether this particular prostration carries the same legal status (obligatory versus recommended) as the standard recitation prostrations found elsewhere in the Qur'an, since some hadith characterize it specifically as a prostration of repentance and gratitude rather than a standard tilawa sajda. Verses 38:26 draw an explicit ethical-political lesson from the episode, addressing Dawud directly as a khalifa ("successor," here in the sense of one entrusted with authority) on earth who must "judge between the people in truth" and not follow desire lest it lead him astray from God's path—generalizing the private judicial trial into a standing principle of just rule.

Sad 38:27–29: creation not in vain, and a Book to be reflected upon

A short but consequential transitional passage separates the Dawud and Sulayman narratives. Verse 38:27 rejects the notion that "We did not create the heaven and the earth and that between them uselessly"—identified as "the assumption of those who disbelieve," for whom denial of purposive creation runs alongside denial of the Fire. Verse 38:28 presses the moral logic of the resurrection argument from a different angle than the earlier physical analogies: it would be inconsistent, the verse argues, for God to treat "those who believe and do righteous deeds" the same as "corrupters upon the earth," or the righteous the same as the wicked—divine justice, not merely divine power, requires an afterlife in which moral asymmetries are redressed. Verse 38:29 then characterizes the Qur'an itself as "a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded"—a statement of purpose bridging the surah's narrative material and situating the prophetic

case histories that follow as material for reflection (tadabbur) rather than mere history.

Sad 38:30–40: Sulayman's trial

The surah turns next to Sulayman (Solomon), described as an "excellent servant, one repeatedly turning back [to Allah]" (38:30). Verses 38:31–33 recount an episode involving fine horses that distracted him until evening prayer, after which he orders the horses brought back and (in the text's somewhat compressed description) strikes their legs and necks—an episode exegetes have read variously, some as an act of repentant self-correction after being distracted from worship. The passage then turns to a second trial, verses 38:34–35: "And We certainly tried Solomon and placed on his throne a body; then he returned. He said, 'My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom that will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower.'" The nature of the trial—the "body" placed upon his throne—is not elaborated in the Qur'anic text itself and has generated diverse exegetical speculation without settled classical consensus; what is textually clear is Sulayman's response, an unusual and specific petition for a uniquely unrepeatable kingdom, which God grants: dominion over the wind and the devils (jinn), including builders and divers, "and others bound in shackles" (38:36–38), concluding with the assurance that this is a gift "without account," i.e., without limit or precise reckoning owed.

Sad 38:41–44: Ayyub's trial and the rukhsa of the grass bundle

The account of Ayyub (Job) follows: "And remember Our servant Job, when he called to his Lord, 'Indeed, Satan has touched me with hardship and torment'" (38:41). God's response commands him to strike the ground with his foot, producing a cool spring for bathing and drink (38:42), and restores his household to him "and the like thereof with them, as mercy from Us and a reminder for those of understanding" (38:43). Verse 38:44 records a distinctive legal dispensation: "And take in your hand a bundle [of grass] and strike with it and do not break your oath." This is frequently cited in classical fiqh as a case of rukhsa, a legal leniency permitting the technical fulfillment of an oath (which Ayyub had apparently sworn to strike someone or something a certain number of times) through a symbolic rather than a fully

literal enactment—striking once with a many-stranded bundle counted as fulfilling a vow to strike multiple times—illustrating a broader jurisprudential principle of accommodating hardship within the bounds of formal oath-keeping. Hadith and tafsir literature link the broader Ayyub narrative to Prophetic teaching on patience (sabr) in illness and affliction, though direct hadith specifically expounding this particular Qur'anic passage, as distinct from independent narrative traditions about Ayyub, are comparatively sparse in the collections and should be treated with appropriate caution.

Sad 38:45–64: further prophets and the dialogue of the damned

Verses 38:45–48 briefly commend Ibrahim, Ishaq, and Ya'qub as "possessors of strength and vision," and Isma'il, al-Yasa' (Elisha), and Dhu'l-Kifl as being "among the outstanding." The surah then pivots sharply into eschatological description: a portrayal of Paradise as "a good place of return" for the righteous (38:49–54) contrasted with an extended, dramatic depiction of Hellfire and, notably, the mutual recrimination among its inhabitants—leaders and followers blaming one another, each wishing greater punishment on the other for having led them astray (38:55–64), a scene closely paralleling the dispute among the damned already encountered in as-Saffat 37:22–33. This dialogue-of-the-damned motif is a recurring Qur'anic device for depicting the moral bankruptcy of unrepentant wrongdoing, showing that shared punishment produces not solidarity but continued mutual blame.

Sad 38:65–85: Adam, Iblis, and the cosmic wager

The surah closes with the narrative of Adam's creation and Iblis's refusal to prostrate—among the Qur'an's most theologically consequential passages on the origin of evil and human vulnerability to temptation. God announces to the angels His intention to create a human being from clay and, having fashioned him and breathed into him of His spirit, commands the angels to prostrate; all comply except Iblis (38:71–74). When questioned, Iblis offers his justification at verses 38:75–76: asked what prevented him from prostrating to what God created with His own hands, Iblis replies, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay"—an argument from claimed elemental superiority that the Qur'an presents as fundamentally flawed reasoning, since it prioritizes substance over the honor

conferred by direct divine fashioning and the breathing of the spirit. Iblis is expelled and cursed (38:77–78), but is granted a reprieve until "the Day of Recompense" upon request (38:79–81), whereupon he vows, at verses 38:82–83, to mislead humankind "all together, except, among them, Your sincere servants (al-mukhlasin)"—a vow that explicitly exempts the sincerely devoted from his power of seduction, establishing sincerity (ikhlas) as the operative safeguard against temptation, a theme that becomes the organizing principle of the very next surah, az-Zumar. The passage closes (38:84–85) with God's decree that Hell will be filled with Iblis and all who follow him, "all together," and the surah ends (38:86–88) with the Prophet disclaiming any wage for his preaching and affirming that the Qur'an is "a reminder to the worlds," its truth to be known "after a time."

Az-Zumar 39:1–8: sincerity, creation, and the rejection of unnecessary intercession

Az-Zumar (whose title means "the Companies," referring to a later scene not reached in this juz') opens with a declaration of the Qur'an's divine origin (39:1) and an explicit call to exclusive devotion: "Indeed, We have sent down to you the Book in truth, so worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion" (39:2), followed immediately by God's own characterization as the one to whom "sincere religion" is due. Verse 39:3 addresses those who worship other than God with the rationale "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position"—an important verse for understanding the Meccan conception of intercessory idolatry, which the Qur'an here characterizes not as a rejection of the supreme God's existence but as a mistaken belief in the utility of intermediaries to gain divine proximity, a practice the verse's continuation condemns as tantamount to associating partners with God despite this qualifying rationale. Verses 39:5–6 turn to cosmological and embryological signs: the creation of the heavens and earth in truth, the wrapping of night over day and day over night, the subjugation of sun and moon each running for a specified term, and, in verse 39:6, a description of the successive stages of creation within the womb, "creation after creation in three darknesses"—commonly read by exegetes as referring to embryonic development, though the text itself does not specify the anatomical detail attributed to it in some modern apologetic literature, which

again invites the same historiographical caution noted earlier regarding scientific-concordist readings. Verses 39:7–8 note that human ingratitude toward God does not diminish God in any way ("if you disbelieve, indeed, Allah is Free from need of you"), and describe the inconsistency of a person who calls sincerely upon God in hardship but forgets Him once relieved, setting up "rivals" to God's favor once again.

Az-Zumar 39:9: knowledge and devotion

This verse has become one of the most frequently cited in later Islamic scholarly and devotional literature on the merit of religious knowledge: "Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing [in prayer], fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord, [like one who does not]? Say, 'Are those who know equal to those who do not know?' Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding." Al-Qurtubi discusses this verse's use in establishing the superior merit of 'ilm (religious knowledge) and of night prayer (qiyam al-layl), and it has been extensively cited in later Sufi and scholarly literature as scriptural grounding for the elevated status of the learned and the spiritually devoted. The verse's rhetorical structure—posing the comparison as a question rather than a flat assertion—is typical of Qur'anic argumentation, inviting the listener's own reasoned assent rather than issuing a bare didactic claim.

Az-Zumar 39:10–22: the patient, sincere worship, and the parable of the two masters

The following section reassures the "good-doers" of ample reward (39:10) and reiterates the Prophet's commission to worship God with sincere religion (39:11), rejecting compulsion for others while affirming his own personal fear of the "punishment of a tremendous Day" should he disobey (39:13). Verses 39:17–18 commend "those who avoid taghut, lest they worship it, and turn back to Allah," described as attentive listeners who "follow the best of it"—a verse often cited for its implicit endorsement of discernment and comparative evaluation of speech rather than uncritical acceptance. Verse 39:22 poses a rhetorical contrast: "So is one whose breast Allah has expanded to Islam and he is upon a light from his Lord [like one whose heart is hardened]?"—continuing the surah's recurring device of paired contrasts

between the receptive and the hardened, the knowing and the ignorant, sincere devotion and half-hearted or divided allegiance. This device culminates shortly after the juz's endpoint in the well-known parable (39:29) of a man owned by quarreling partners contrasted with a man wholly owned by a single master, illustrating the incoherence of divided worship versus the clarity of exclusive devotion to God, though that verse falls just beyond this juz's boundary.

Az-Zumar 39:23: the Qur'an's self-description

The juz' closes its substantive treatment on a verse describing the Qur'an's own effect on its hearers: "Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration (mathani). The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts relax at the remembrance of Allah. That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whom He wills." This is a key text for understanding the Qur'an's self-characterization as internally consistent despite its length and the reiterative (mathani) quality of its themes and formulas—recurring narratives, refrains, and warnings reappearing across suras in varied form—and for describing a two-stage psychosomatic response to its recitation: an initial shivering or trembling (gooseflesh) provoked by fear, followed by a settling calm at the mention of God's remembrance (dhikr). This verse has been central to later discussions, both devotional and academic, of Qur'anic aesthetics, recitational practice (tajwid and its emotional cultivation), and claims of the text's inimitability (i'jaz), insofar as it presents the Qur'an's affective power over reciters and listeners as itself a mark of its divine origin. The remaining verses of this opening section of az-Zumar (39:24–31, extending to the juz's endpoint) continue to contrast the fate of the shielded-by-their-own-evil on the Day of Resurrection with the guided, briefly recall (39:25–26) the earlier peoples destroyed for their denial as a further warning, and affirm, via a parable of complex Arabic speech (39:27–28), that the Qur'an has been made "without any deviance" so that its hearers may be mindful—themes that carry forward into the following juz'.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, Juz' 23 advances a single sustained argument through varied literary means: that the God who originates life, sustains cosmic order, and raises the dead is one, and that the appropriate human response is sincere, undivided devotion rather than the intercessory or divided worship the Qur'an repeatedly diagnoses among its Meccan interlocutors. Ya-Sin's closing movement grounds resurrection in tangible analogies—dead earth, decayed bone, fire from green wood—before resting the argument on the unmediated divine command "Be." As-Saffat extends the same polemic through its own reckoning-and-recrimination scene and the stark Zaqqum/garden contrast, then supplies the human content of this theology through prophetic biography: Ibrahim's confrontation with astral idolatry and his and his son's mutual submission in the sacrifice narrative, and the vindication of Musa, Ilyas, Lut, and Yunus despite hardship or lapse. Sad continues in the same key: Dawud's and Sulayman's trials and candid repentance, preserving prophetic dignity without denying fallibility; the reminder that creation is purposive rather than vain, which grounds the moral necessity of an afterlife; Ayyub's patience and the legal accommodation shown him; and, in Iblis's primordial refusal and vow, an etiology of temptation that explicitly exempts the sincere. Az-Zumar's opening then names the operative virtue toward which all this narrative material points—ikhlas, sincerity—casting the entire juz's argument, from cosmic signs to prophetic trial, as ultimately in service of a single ethical-theological demand: that worship, like the divine unity it addresses, must be undivided.

Juz’ 24: Surah az-Zumar 39:32 — Surah Fussilat 41:46

Surah az-Zumar 39:32 through Surah Fussilat 41:46

Juz’ 24 opens midway through Surah az-Zumar (“The Groups”), continuing that surah’s meditation on divine unity and the fate of the sincere versus the associationist, before the surah closes with one of the Qur’an’s most vivid dual processions to Paradise and Hell. It then carries the reader through the whole of Surah Ghafir (also called al-Mu’min, “The Believer”), whose center of gravity is the Musa-Pharaoh narrative and, within it, the extended speech of an anonymous believer in Pharaoh’s own household. The juz’ concludes with the opening forty-six verses of Surah Fussilat (Ha-Mim as-Sajdah), a surah preoccupied with the clarity of revelation, the natural signs of God, cosmogony, and the ethics of patient forbearance in the face of hostility. Together these three surahs belong to what modern source-critical scholarship (Neuwirth, Sinai) designates the “Ha-Mim group,” seven surahs sharing formal and thematic family resemblance, all situated in the later Meccan period.

Az-Zumar 39:32-52 — Ingratitude, Guidance, and the Limits of Human Autonomy

The passage picks up the surah’s running polemic against those who “lie against Allah” and against the truth when it comes to them. Verses 36-37 turn on divine sufficiency: “Is not Allah sufficient for His Servant [Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him,]? … And whoever Allah guides — for him there is no misleader.” The rhetorical structure here is antithetical and symmetric, a hallmark of the surah’s style: guidance and misguidance are both presented as ultimately resting with God, a point classical theology (particularly Ash‘ari-inflected exegesis) reads as an affirmation of divine sovereignty over belief, while Mu‘tazili-leaning readings historically stressed the accompanying human responsibility implied elsewhere in the same passage. Verses 41-42 turn to sleep and death as parallel signs — the soul “taken” at death and the soul “not yet dead” taken in its sleep — an image often cited in discussions of the Qur’anic concept of the soul (nafs) and its states.

Verses 49-52 then diagnose a recurring psychological pattern: when hardship touches a person, they call upon God, but once favor is granted they attribute it to their own knowledge (39:49, “I was only given it because of knowledge I have”) — a verse frequently linked by commentators to the Qarun narrative told elsewhere in the Qur’an, though here treated in generalized, non-narrative form. This sets up the passage’s conclusion: such people “will be struck by the evil consequences of what they earned” (39:51), and Allah “extends provision for whom He wills and restricts it” as a sign for a believing people (39:52) — a theodicy in miniature, denying any straightforward correlation between prosperity and divine approval.

Az-Zumar 39:53 — The Verse of Hope

“Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’”

This verse stands as one of the most theologically consequential in the entire Qur’an, and exegetes across centuries have treated it almost as a discrete unit rather than folding it silently into its context. Ibn Kathir, in his commentary, reports hadith material affirming the verse’s expansive scope and notes that it was remembered among the Companions as one of the most hope-giving revelations, given to habitual sinners. Related hadith material, including reports gathered in Sahih Muslim, frames this verse (together with kindred passages) as one that, had it not been revealed, would have left people despairing of forgiveness altogether — though the precise wording and chains of these reports vary across collections, and the point is best taken as reflecting a broadly attested prophetic emphasis rather than a single fixed hadith text. Classical jurists and theologians debated the verse’s scope carefully: does “all sins” (jami‘ al-dhunub) include shirk (associating partners with God), given that elsewhere the Qur’an states shirk is unforgiven if died upon unrepented (cf. 4:48, 4:116)? The consensus resolution, reflected in Ibn Kathir and others, reads 39:53 as addressing repentant sinners generally, with the shirk exception understood as applying specifically to death without repentance — the verse’s force lying in its refusal to let any sin, on its own, foreclose the possibility of return. Fazlur Rahman, in his thematic treatment of the Qur’an, singles out this verse

alongside Ghafir 40:60 as paradigmatic of the Qur’an’s structural pairing of moral accountability (taqwa) with hope (raja‘) — neither collapsing into complacency nor into despair.

Az-Zumar 39:56-58 — The Regret of the Neglectful Soul

The verses immediately following turn to eschatology: “Lest a soul should say, ‘Oh [how great is] my regret over what I neglected in regard to Allah, and that I was among the mockers.’” Two further hypothetical utterances follow — a wish that God had guided the speaker (39:57), and a wish for a second chance to “be among the doers of good” (39:58) — building a threefold crescendo of remorse that homiletic literature across the Islamic tradition has drawn upon extensively as a meditation on procrastination in matters of faith (taswif). The rhetorical device — a hypothetical first-person lament placed in the mouth of the damned — recurs elsewhere in the Qur’an and is treated by literary-critical scholarship as a device for eliciting present-tense reflection in the listener rather than merely describing a future scene.

Az-Zumar 39:62-75 — Closing Eschatology and the Surah’s Title

The surah’s close affirms God as “Creator of all things,” holder of the “keys of the heavens and earth” (39:62-63), and pivots to the Day of Judgment: the trumpet sounded, causing all in the heavens and earth to fall unconscious except whom God wills, followed by a second sounding at which “they will be standing, looking on” (39:68). This is followed by the scene from which the surah draws its name. The disbelievers are “driven to Hell in groups” (zumar, 39:71), and upon reaching it, its keepers ask them, “Did there not come to you messengers from among you, reciting to you the verses of your Lord?” — met with an admission of truth, but too late. The righteous are, by contrast, “driven to Paradise in groups” (39:73) and greeted with, “Peace be upon you, you have become pure, so enter it to abide eternally therein.” The believers respond with praise, “thanks be to Allah, who has fulfilled for us His promise” (39:74). The passage closes on angels encircling the Throne in praise, and judgment “made in truth” between all creation, with the declaration “praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds” (39:75) — a doxological seal appropriate to the surah’s closing. The double procession — one rebuffed at gates already reproachful, one welcomed by gates already open

— is a structurally deliberate antithesis, and it is this image, rather than any single verse, that gives the surah its title, “The Groups” or “The Companies.”

Ghafir (al-Mu’min) — Opening and the Angelic Intercession

Surah Ghafir opens with the disjoined letters Ha-Mim, shared across the seven-surah group, followed immediately by a chain of divine attributes: “the forgiveness of sin, the acceptance of repentance, severe in punishment, owner of abundance. There is no deity except Him; to Him is the destination” (40:2-3). This opening cluster is significant for setting the surah’s tone: mercy and severity held in tension from the first lines, a pairing that recurs through the whole. Verses 7-9 then present the angels who bear the Throne, and those surrounding it, engaged in praise and — crucially — intercessory prayer: “Those who carry the Throne and those around it exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who have believed, [saying], ‘Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who have repented and followed Your way and protect them from the punishment of Hellfire.’” The prayer continues asking that believers be admitted, along with the righteous among their forebears, spouses, and descendants, into the “gardens of Eden” (40:8), closing with a plea to be protected from “evil consequences” (sayyi’at) “that Day” (40:9). This passage is notable theologically as one of the Qur’an’s clearest depictions of angelic intercessory prayer on behalf of the believing community generally, rather than intercession tied to a specific individual’s merit, and it has been drawn upon in later discussions of the doctrine of shafa‘ah (intercession).

Ghafir 40:23-46 — The Musa-Pharaoh Narrative and the Believing Man’s Discourse

The bulk of the surah’s narrative center recounts the sending of Musa and Harun “with Our signs and a clear authority” (40:23) to Pharaoh, Haman, and Qarun, who respond by calling Musa “a magician and a liar” (40:24) and plotting to kill him. It is at this juncture that the surah introduces its most distinctive contribution to the Musa cycle as told across the Qur’an: an anonymous believer within Pharaoh’s own household who had, per the text, “concealed his faith.”

“And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who concealed his faith said, ‘Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, “My Lord is Allah” while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord?…’” (40:28)

Al-Tabari’s Jami‘ al-Bayan records variant reports on this figure’s identity, some naming him as a paternal relative of Pharaoh who had kept his belief hidden out of fear, situating the episode within the wider Musa narrative material distributed across earlier Meccan surahs (al-A‘raf, Ta-Ha, ash-Shu‘ara). These identifications are transmitted with differing chains and should be read as exegetical tradition rather than settled historical fact. The man’s speech extends across some seventeen verses (40:28-45), constructing a sustained legal-rhetorical argument: he first appeals to prudence — even granting Musa might be lying, the risk of harming a truthful messenger is graver than tolerating a possible liar (40:28); he then warns Pharaoh’s court of the historical fate of “factions” before them, listing the peoples of Nuh, ‘Ad, and Thamud and those after them, destroyed for wrongdoing (40:30-31); he invokes the “Day of Calling out to one another” and mutual disowning among those who followed false leadership (40:32-33); he recalls the earlier precedent of Yusuf, who came “with clear proofs” yet was doubted by an earlier generation until his death, after which the same community said Allah would send no more messengers (40:34); and he closes contrasting the transience of worldly life with the eternity of the Hereafter (40:39), concluding with his own declaration of trust in God and God’s protection from “the evil they plotted” (40:44-45), the passage ending on Pharaoh’s family being “exposed to the Fire morning and evening” and, on the Day when the Hour appears, commanded into “the severest of punishment” (40:46).

Literary-critical Qur’anic scholarship has singled out this discourse as a paradigmatic case of embedded forensic rhetoric — a speech constructed with the argumentative moves of legal advocacy (appeal to uncertainty, appeal to precedent, appeal to consequence) placed within a narrative frame, comparable to other instances of extended reported speech used for ethical argument elsewhere in the Qur’an. Traditionally, commentators have also read the man’s posture — quiet, principled dissent maintained under threat within a hostile court — as resonant with, though not explicitly linked

by the text itself to, the position of early Muslims practicing faith under pressure in Mecca; Ibn ‘Ashur’s al-Tahrir wa’l-Tanwir situates the whole surah, along with Fussilat, within this late Meccan climate of entrenched Quraysh opposition, reading the extended historical admonitions throughout both surahs as a rhetorical strategy suited to an audience grown inured to warning.

Ghafir 40:47-52, 69-85 — Recrimination in the Fire and the History of Nations

Following the Pharaoh material, the surah depicts mutual recrimination among the damned: the weak reproach those who were arrogant in the world for having misled them, and the arrogant disclaim responsibility, both told they will share the punishment (40:47-48). A further exchange has the people of the Fire ask its keepers to appeal to God for even one day’s relief, met with the keepers’ reply that messengers had already come with clear proofs, and the prayers of the disbelievers avail nothing (40:49-50). The passage affirms that God will grant victory to His messengers and to the believers, “on the Day when the witnesses arise” (40:51), reflecting a pattern found throughout the Meccan corpus in which prophetic vindication is promised even where its timing is left unspecified.

The surah’s close (40:69-85) surveys those who dispute God’s signs and returns once more to the fates of earlier nations — the people of Nuh, ‘Ad, Thamud, and “those after them” — as admonitory history, alongside a final scene of a disbelieving people who, upon seeing God’s punishment approach, offer belated faith that is no longer accepted (40:84-85), an image recalling the Pharaoh episode itself and reinforcing the surah’s function as a nadhir (warner) text addressed to a Meccan audience confident in its rejection.

Ghafir 40:60 — On Supplication

“And your Lord says, ‘Call upon Me; I will respond to you. Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.’”

This verse became, independently of its narrative context, one of the central Qur’anic texts in the later fiqh al-du‘a (jurisprudence of supplication)

literature. Hadith material transmitted in collections such as Sunan al-Tirmidhi, and cited by Ibn Kathir among others, reports the Prophet identifying du‘a itself as an act of worship — al-du‘a huwa al-‘ibadah — such that neglecting supplication altogether is here characterized as a form of prideful disdain (istikbar) toward God. The verse’s placement, immediately after the historical recitals of destroyed nations, situates supplication not as a peripheral devotional add-on but as constitutive of the proper posture of creature before Creator — the alternative to supplication being, in the verse’s own terms, contemptible entry into Hell rather than mere neutral omission.

Fussilat (Ha-Mim as-Sajdah) 41:1-8 — Prologue on Qur’anic Clarity

The surah opens again with Ha-Mim, followed by a description of itself as “a revelation from the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, a Book whose verses have been detailed, an Arabic Qur’an for a people who know” (41:2-3) — establishing from its outset a self-referential concern with the clarity (tafsil) and Arabic idiom of the revelation, a theme the surah will return to at its close. Verses 4-5 note that the Qur’an is “bearer of good tidings and warner,” yet most of its Meccan audience “turned away” and describe their hearts as veiled and their ears as deafened against it — imagery of willed incomprehension rather than intellectual incapacity. Verses 6-8 instruct the Prophet to declare his shared humanity (“I am only a man like you”) while distinguished by revelation, call to worship of the one God, and warn the associationists, promising reward without end for believers who do righteous deeds.

Fussilat 41:9-18 — Cosmogony and the Fate of ‘Ad and Thamud

This block contains the surah’s most scientifically and philologically discussed passage: “Say, ‘Do you indeed disbelieve in He who created the earth in two days…’” followed by an account of mountains set firmly upon it, blessings, and measured sustenance apportioned “in four days” (41:9-10), and then God’s “directing Himself to the heaven, while it was smoke,” commanding it and the earth to “come willingly or by compulsion,” to which both respond, “We have come willingly” (41:11), culminating in seven heavens “determined” or fashioned “in two days” (41:12). The arithmetic of

these stages (two days, four days, two days) and their relationship to the six "days" (ayyam) of creation mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'an has occupied a considerable body of classical harmonizing exegesis, working out how the stages combine into six total periods without contradiction; some modern academic literature has additionally situated this passage alongside comparative ancient Near Eastern cosmogonic accounts, though such comparisons remain, as with much of comparative cosmogony, a matter of ongoing discussion rather than settled consensus. The term "days" (ayyam) itself has long been read by many exegetes as denoting epochs or phases rather than strictly solar days, particularly given that the sun itself is only fashioned within this same sequence.

The passage then turns from cosmogony to admonitory history: warning delivered to 'Ad and Thamud is rejected, and each is destroyed — 'Ad by a "furious wind" (41:16) and Thamud, who were "guided but preferred blindness," struck by "the thunderbolt of humiliating punishment" (41:17) for what they had earned, while believers among them were saved (41:18). The rhetorical move — pairing cosmological grandeur with historical catastrophe — mirrors Ghafir's pairing of divine mercy with severe punishment, reinforcing the Ha-Mim group's recurring structural logic.

Fussilat 41:19-25 — Testimony of One's Own Body

A striking eschatological scene follows: on the Day the enemies of God are gathered and driven to the Fire, "until, when they come to it, their hearing and their eyes and their skins will testify against them of what they used to do" (41:20). When they ask their skins why they testified against them, the reply comes: "Allah caused us to speak, He who has caused everything to speak" (41:21). The passage further notes they had not hidden their deeds for fear their own faculties would testify, but rather because they assumed God did not know much of what they did (41:22) — an observation on the psychology of transgression, namely that concealment from human witnesses is often mistaken for concealment from God altogether. Some tafsir literature links this passage to reports describing Meccan polytheists conversing near the Ka'ba about whether God could hear their private speech; this link is best treated as an illustrative traditional association rather than an established occasion of revelation.

Fussilat 41:26-31 — Noisy Disruption and Angelic Reassurance

“And those who disbelieve say, ‘Do not listen to this Qur’an and speak noisily during [the recitation of] it that perhaps you will overcome.’” (41:26)

This verse is one of the few in the juz’ with a reasonably specific, if variantly transmitted, seerah linkage. Reports cited across the sira and tafsir literature describe Quraysh leaders — Abu Jahl among those named — instructing followers to disrupt the Prophet’s public recitation with noise, shouting, whistling, or clapping so that its rhetorical force upon listeners would be blunted. Commentators treat this as illustrative background context for the verse rather than resting on a single strong chain of transmission, and Ibn ‘Ashur specifically notes the structural link between this passage and the surah’s opening emphasis on Qur’anic clarity — the noise-making strategy is presented as a direct, almost literal attempt to obstruct exactly the clarity (tafsil, bayan) the surah opens by asserting. The passage promises the disbelievers a “severe punishment” and recompense “worse than what they used to do” (41:27-28), followed by mutual blame among the misguided and their misleaders (41:29), before pivoting to a passage of consolation for believers: those who affirm “Our Lord is Allah” and remain steadfast are met by descending angels reassuring them, “Do not fear and do not grieve, but receive good tidings of Paradise” (41:30), the angels describing themselves as “your protectors in the worldly life and in the Hereafter” (41:31) — a passage frequently drawn upon devotionally for its directness of comfort.

Fussilat 41:34-35 — Repelling Evil with Good

“Good and evil are not equal. Repel [evil] with what is better; then the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend. But none is granted it except those who are patient, and none is granted it except one having a great portion [of good].”

Az-Zamakhshari’s al-Kashshaf, frequently cited by later commentators on this verse, offers a rhetorical (balaghi) analysis of the antithesis structuring the passage — the flat non-equivalence asserted between good and evil (la tastawi) followed immediately by an imperative built on a comparative (adfa‘ bi’llati hiya ahsan, “repel with that which is better,” not merely “with good”), implying an ethic that exceeds mere reciprocity. The transformative claim

that follows — enmity converted into intimate friendship — is presented as a real possible outcome of this practice, not merely a pious sentiment, though the passage immediately qualifies that such forbearance is granted only to those possessing patience (sabr) and “a great portion” (hazz ‘azim) of good character, read by commentators as praise of hilm (forbearance, self-mastery) as a rare and weighty virtue rather than an easily attained disposition. Verse 36 follows with a reminder that should an incitement from Satan intrude upon this resolve, one should seek refuge in God, since He is the Hearing, the Knowing — anchoring the ethical instruction in a theological safeguard against its erosion by provocation.

Fussilat 41:37 — The Verse of Prostration

“And of His signs are the night and day and the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate to the sun or to the moon, but prostrate to Allah, who created them, if it should be Him that you worship.”

Al-Qurtubi’s al-Jami‘ li-Ahkam al-Qur’an treats this verse as one of the classical loci for the ruling on sujud al-tilawah, the prostration of recitation, discussing the juristic divergence between the Hanafi school, which holds such prostration obligatory upon recitation or audition of this and comparable verses, and the Shafi‘i and Maliki schools, which regard it as recommended (mustahabb) rather than obligatory. This verse is counted among the standard ayat al-sajdah recited within prayer, though the precise total number of such verses across the Qur’an — variously counted as eleven, fourteen, or fifteen depending on school — remains a matter of continuing juristic discussion rather than settled by a single hadith. Theologically, the verse’s content is straightforward and emphatic: night, day, sun, and moon are signs (ayat) pointing to their Creator, and the prohibition against prostrating to the created luminaries themselves — plainly aimed at solar and lunar veneration attested among pre-Islamic Arabian and broader ancient Near Eastern religious practice — redirects worship to the one responsible for their existence.

Fussilat 41:38-46 — Closing Affirmations and the Question of Arabic Revelation

The section closes reaffirming that those who are arrogant toward this worship are still with those who glorify God “by night and day” (41:38), followed by a further natural sign — the reviving of barren earth by rain as an emblem of resurrection (41:39) — and a warning against those who distort (yulhidun) His signs (41:40). Verses 41-42 defend the Qur’an itself against falsehood “from before it or from behind it,” describing it as revelation from “a Wise, Praiseworthy” God, while verse 44 addresses directly the question, raised by earlier audiences, of what would happen were the Qur’an revealed in a non-Arabic tongue: “If We had made it a Qur’an in a foreign language, they would have said, ‘Why are its verses not explained in detail [in our language]? Is it a foreign [recitation] and an Arab [messenger]?’” This verse has been treated in classical discussions of i‘jaz al-Qur’an (the Qur’an’s inimitability) as bound up with its Arabic idiom specifically — the claim to linguistic and rhetorical excellence being inseparable, in this line of argument, from the Arabic medium itself, such that a non-Arabic revelation to an Arab audience would have generated its own, different objection. The surah’s portion within this juz’ closes noting that the Qur’an is guidance and healing for believers while those who disbelieve have “deafness” in their ears (41:44), a reminder that earlier scripture (given to Musa) likewise provoked disagreement (41:45), and the closing affirmation that whoever does righteousness benefits his own soul, and whoever does evil works against it, for God is not unjust to His servants (41:46) — a summary maxim of moral individual accountability that closes the juz’ on a note of ethical clarity.

Synthesis

Read as a unit, this juz’ moves through a sustained meditation on the relationship between divine mercy and divine severity, refusing to resolve the tension into either side. Az-Zumar closes with a double procession that makes this tension visually concrete: the same divine court, the same Day, yielding rebuke for some and welcome for others. Ghafir opens with a name of God balancing forgiveness and severe punishment in a single breath, sustains that balance across the Pharaoh narrative’s pairing of the believing man’s hope-filled argument with his household’s eventual punishment, and crystallizes it in the terse promise-and-warning of the verse on supplication.

Fussilat extends the same logic into cosmology and ethics: signs in creation point unmistakably toward their Maker, yet are met by some with willed deafness; and the ethical high point of the juz', the instruction to repel evil with what is better, itself embodies the pairing of severity — real enmity, real provocation — with a form of goodness robust enough to absorb and transform it. Read across the whole Ha-Mim grouping, as Neuwirth, Sinai, and Ibn 'Ashur variously note, these three surahs share not only formal features — the disjoined opening letters, extended historical admonition, closing eschatological scenes — but a rhetorical strategy suited to a specific historical moment: a Meccan audience grown practiced at dismissing warning, addressed here through history, cosmology, embedded courtroom rhetoric, and direct ethical instruction, all converging on the same insistence that mercy remains genuinely available even as its refusal carries genuine consequence.

Juz’ 25: Surah Fussilat 41:47 — Surah al-Jathiyah 45:37

Surah Fussilat 41:47 through Surah al-Jathiyah 45:37

Juz' 25 opens mid-argument, near the close of Surah Fussilat, and carries the reader through the whole of Ash-Shura ("Consultation"), Az-Zukhruf ("Ornaments of Gold"), Ad-Dukhan ("Smoke"), and the first thirty-seven verses of al-Jathiyah ("Kneeling"). All five units belong to the Meccan period, and four of them (Fussilat through al-Jathiyah) form part of what the classical tradition and modern scholarship alike recognize as a distinct cluster — the seven so-called Hawamim surahs, all opening with the letters Ha-Mim. Angelika Neuwirth has argued that this cluster shares not only its formulaic opening but a recognizable thematic signature: repeated self-description of the Qur'an as an Arabic revelation, extended reflection on the process and modes of revelation itself, and a shift toward more discursive, argumentative prose compared with the shorter, more incantatory early Meccan surahs. Nicolai Sinai's form-critical work places these surahs in a middle-to-late Meccan phase marked by extended prophetic legitimation narratives — especially Moses versus Pharaoh and Abraham versus his idolatrous kin — alongside engagement with Jewish and Christian tradition, most visibly in the Jesus material of Az-Zukhruf. Thematically, the juz' as a whole revolves around tawhid (divine unity and transcendence), the vindication of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophethood against a cluster of recurring Meccan objections, the moral logic of the Hereafter, and the ethical demands — consultation, forgiveness, restraint from whim-worship — that flow from accepting revealed guidance. No legal or communal-legislative material of the Medinan type appears; the address throughout is doctrinal and polemical, aimed at a skeptical Quraysh audience.

The close of Surah Fussilat (41:47–54)

The juz' begins in the concluding movement of a surah that has spent its earlier verses establishing the Qur'an's clarity and warning of past nations' fates. Verses 47–48 return to the theme of the Hour's timing being known to God alone, and to the disorientation disbelievers will feel when their former objects of worship abandon them at the reckoning. Verses 49–51 turn from

cosmology to psychology, offering one of the Qur'an's characteristic diagnoses of human moral inconsistency:

"Man is not weary of supplication for good, but if evil touches him, he is hopeless and despairing" (41:49).

The verse captures a recurring anthropological theme in the Meccan corpus: untutored human nature oscillates between restless demand in prosperity and despair in adversity, with no stable middle register of gratitude or patience. Verse 51 sharpens this with the image of a man who, when granted favor, "turns away and distances himself," but when touched by evil, is "full of extensive supplication" — a chiastic mirroring of instability that classical exegetes read as an implicit call to the steadier disposition of the believer, who neither despairs nor grows heedless.

The surah's final and most frequently cited verse is 41:53:

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness?"

This verse occupies an outsized place in discussions of Qur'anic epistemology. It proposes a double register of evidentiary "signs" (ayat) — cosmic/external ("in the horizons," fi'l-afaq) and psychological/internal ("within themselves," fi anfusihim) — that together are expected to converge on confirmation of revealed truth over time. Modern apologetic literature has frequently invoked this verse as anticipating scientific or introspective validation of scripture; more cautious academic treatment notes that the verse's own register is prophetic-rhetorical rather than a program for empirical inquiry, promising future disclosure ("We will show them") rather than describing a settled method. The verse closes on a shift from external proof to divine self-witness, subordinating even the sign-argument to the more fundamental claim that God's own testimony suffices — a rhetorical move characteristic of the Hawamim surahs' habit of returning arguments to their theological root.

Surah Ash-Shura (42): opening and the sustaining of creation

The surah opens with disjointed letters — "Ha-Mim, Ayn-Sin-Qaf" (42:1–2) — the only place in the Qur'an this particular five-letter combination occurs. Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, situates such letter-openings within his broader theory that they function as markers pointing to the Qur'an's inimitability: composed, as they are, from the same ordinary alphabetic elements available to any Arabic speaker, yet yielding discourse the tradition holds unmatchable. Verse 42:3 affirms that God reveals to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him "as [He revealed] to those before you," asserting continuity with prior prophetic communication, and verse 42:5 depicts the angels "exalting [Allah] with praise of their Lord and asking forgiveness for those on earth" — a striking image of cosmic intercessory concern extending even to humanity's estranged, idol-worshipping majority, read by commentators as underscoring divine mercy operating prior to and independent of human repentance.

Verse 42:7 supplies one of the surah's most quoted lines: "And thus We have revealed to you an Arabic Qur'an that you may warn the Mother of Cities [Umm al-Qura] and those around it..." The designation "Mother of Cities" for Mecca appears here in its clearest Qur'anic form, tying the revelation's initial audience and geographic center to the sanctuary city before its message radiates outward — a verse frequently invoked in discussions of the Qur'an's self-conscious Arabic and Meccan-centered address, though its universalizing continuation tempers any purely localized reading.

Divine transcendence and the ordaining of one religion (42:10–29)

This middle section carries the surah's theological core. Verse 42:10 asserts that "whatever thing you disagree on – its ruling is [to be referred] to Allah," while 42:11 delivers one of the most consequential tanzih (transcendence) statements in the entire Qur'an: "[He is] Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you from yourselves, mates, and among the cattle, mates; He multiplies you thereby. There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing." The clause "laysa ka-mithlihi shay'" ("there is nothing like unto Him") became, in later kalam (theological) literature, a primary Qur'anic proof-text marshaled against anthropomorphist (mushabbih) readings of divine attributes, cited widely across Islamic theological schools as a scriptural anchor for divine incomparability, even as

those same schools differed sharply over how to reconcile this transcendence with the verse's simultaneous affirmation that God "is the Hearing, the Seeing" — attributes phrased in terms shared with human faculties. The verse thus became a hinge-text in debates over ta'wil (figurative interpretation) versus tafwid (consigning the meaning to God) regarding the "attribute verses."

Verses 42:13–14 then articulate a striking comparative-religion claim: God "has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah, and that which We have revealed to you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus – to establish the religion and not be divided therein." The passage frames prophetic history not as a series of unrelated or superseding revelations but as a single continuous din, with division among communities attributed not to genuine doctrinal necessity but to "injustice among themselves" once knowledge had come to them (42:14). This is among the clearest Qur'anic articulations of the doctrine of prophetic continuity, and it functions polemically against sectarian fragmentation among both the earlier scriptural communities and, implicitly, within the emerging Muslim community itself. Verse 42:23 raises a point of real and continuing exegetical divergence: "Say, I do not ask you for it any payment except love for [my] relatives [al-qurba]." Sunni exegetical tradition generally connects this to Quraysh's kinship obligations toward the Prophet, while Shi'i exegesis reads "al-qurba" as referring specifically to the Prophet's own family (Ahl al-Bayt) — a divergence best presented as a genuine, unresolved point of sectarian interpretive difference rather than a settled asbab report.

Ships as signs, and the ethics of retaliation and forgiveness (42:30–43)

Verses 42:30–35 turn to affliction as a consequence of human deeds ("whatever strikes you of disaster is for what your hands have earned," 42:30) and to the image of great ships sailing the sea "as landmarks" (42:32), a natural sign of divine favor that could, God notes, be withdrawn by stilling the wind entirely (42:33) — part of the Qur'an's broader repertoire of maritime and cosmic ayat.

The section's ethical centerpiece is 42:40–43, on retaliation and pardon: "And the retribution for an evil act is an equivalent evil, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, his reward is [due] from Allah... And whoever avenges himself after having been wronged - those have not upon them any cause [for blame]. The cause is only against the ones who wrong the people... But whoever is patient and forgives - indeed, that is of the matters [requiring] determination." Al-Qurtubi, in al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an, draws legal-ethical rulings from this passage on qisas (proportionate retaliation), situating it alongside comparable verses elsewhere in the Qur'an (2:178, 16:126) as part of a coherent teaching that permits proportionate redress while consistently elevating voluntary forgiveness as the superior, though not obligatory, course. The passage's structure — permission, then repeated valorization of restraint — is characteristic of Qur'anic ethical pedagogy, which tends not to prohibit retaliation outright but to make forgiveness the aspirational norm.

The consultation verse and modes of revelation (42:38, 42:51)

Embedded within a description of the believers' virtues, verse 42:38 supplies what has become the locus classicus for the principle of shura: "And those who have responded to their lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend." Ibn Kathir treats this as commendation of a general communal disposition, illustrating it with the Prophet's practice of consulting his Companions — notably before the battles of Badr and Uhud — without deriving from the verse any specific constitutional mechanism or binding procedural rule. This restraint is significant against the backdrop of modern Islamic political thought, where 42:38 has been invoked far more expansively as scriptural warrant for parliamentary or democratic consultation; the classical commentary tradition itself supports the general ethical principle of consultation as praiseworthy without specifying its institutional form, a distinction worth preserving analytically.

Toward the surah's close, verse 42:51 offers a rare piece of explicit Qur'anic reflection on its own mode of transmission: "It is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He

wills." The verse enumerates three channels of divine communication — direct inspiration, speech from behind a veil (the mode associated with Moses at the burning bush), and angelic mediation — and has drawn sustained attention in discussions of revelatory epistemology, including in Daniel Madigan's work on the Qur'an's self-referential vocabulary, as a rare moment where the text classifies its own communicative mechanism.

Surah Az-Zukhruf (43): Qur'anic self-description and the Preserved Tablet

Az-Zukhruf opens by reasserting the Qur'an's Arabic clarity and heavenly archetype: "Indeed, We have made it an Arabic Qur'an that you might understand. And indeed it is, in the Mother of the Book [Umm al-Kitab] with Us, exalted and full of wisdom" (43:3–4). This passage is foundational for the later doctrine of al-Lawh al-Mahfuz, the Preserved Tablet, understood as the heavenly archetype from which the Qur'an's earthly recitation derives. The verse has been closely studied by scholars such as Neuwirth and Madigan for what it reveals about the Qur'an's developing self-understanding — not merely a message delivered but a text with a trans-historical, heavenly counterpart, which lends the earthly recitation an authority anchored beyond the contingencies of its immediate Meccan reception.

Verses 43:15–19 pivot to polemic against the ascription of daughters — understood as angels — to God by Meccan polytheists, criticizing the incongruity of attributing to the deity what the objectors themselves would be ashamed to have attributed to their own daughters (43:17), and criticizing the further inconsistency of worshipping female angels whom they simultaneously hold in low esteem relative to their preferred male offspring.

Abraham, the "follow our fathers" argument, and the wealth objection (43:20–35)

Verses 43:22–24 present a recurring da'wah pattern-passage: every warner sent to a community before Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him was met with the same objection — "Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following." The Qur'an frames this traditionalist appeal to ancestral custom as the constant excuse of every rejecting community, deliberately generalizing Meccan resistance to Prophet

Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him as merely the latest instance of an old and recognizable pattern. Abraham's declaration of disassociation from his people's idolatry — "indeed, I am disassociated from that which you worship... I am [disassociated] toward Him who created me" (43:26–27) — is then presented as "a word to remain among his descendants" (43:28), establishing monotheistic testimony as a durable inheritance rather than a one-time event.

Verse 43:31 raises the wealth-based objection to Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophethood directly: "And they said, 'Why was this Qur'an not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities?'" Classical asbab al-nuzul literature, including material attributed to al-Wahidi as later reproduced by al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, connects this to Meccan insistence that revelation should have been given to a prominent, wealthy notable of Mecca or Ta'if — reports variously name al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah or 'Urwah ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi as the sort of figure Quraysh had in mind, though such reports vary in detail and should be treated as broadly rather than uniformly attested. The Qur'an's reply (43:32) inverts the objection's premise, noting that God, not human beings, distributes livelihood and rank, and that worldly wealth is in any case a lesser measure of value than "the mercy of your Lord," which is "better than what they accumulate" — followed by a vivid image (43:33–35) of the trivial worldly wealth God would have granted the wicked, were it not that all humanity might be tempted into a single faithless community, underscoring that material abundance is deliberately withheld as a form of restraint rather than divine neglect.

Moses and Pharaoh resumed; the qarin doctrine (43:36, 43:46–56)

Verse 43:36 introduces a psychologically striking image that became the basis for an entire doctrinal elaboration: "And whoever is blinded from remembrance of the Most Merciful - We appoint for him a devil, and he is to him a companion [qarin]." Ibn Kathir elaborates this at length, citing the hadith preserved in Sahih Muslim in which the Prophet states that every person has been assigned a jinn companion, adding the Prophet's own report that his qarin had "submitted" (aslama), such that it enjoined him only to good. This hadith is used by exegetes to explain the verse's differential application: the qarin functions destructively for the heedless who neglect

God's remembrance, but the same institution — a constant unseen companion — is neutralized or even reversed in its effect for the vigilant believer, and was, per the tradition, entirely subdued in the Prophet's own case.

Verses 43:46–56 return to the Moses-Pharaoh narrative already familiar from earlier surahs, here compressed to emphasize Pharaoh's escalating arrogance ("O my people, does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me...?" 43:51) and mockery of Moses' unadorned appearance, followed swiftly by the drowning judgment (43:55) — presented, in keeping with the surah's rhetorical strategy, as a comparative precedent of prideful rejection meeting destruction, directly relevant to the immediate Meccan audience being addressed.

The Christological dispute (43:57–65) and the polemic against filial claims (43:81)

One of the surah's most theologically consequential passages opens at 43:57: "And when the son of Mary is presented as an example, immediately your people laugh aloud." Several early reports, cited by al-Wahidi and reproduced by Ibn Kathir, connect this to a specific Meccan objection — associated in some accounts with 'Abdullah ibn al-Zib'ara — that if idols worshipped besides God are consigned to Hell per the earlier Qur'anic statement in Surah al-Anbiya (21:98), then Jesus, worshipped by Christians, should by the same logic also be in Hell. The Qur'an's rebuttal clarifies that the earlier verse addressed objects and beings that consented to or were complicit in their own worship, whereas Jesus is exempted as "a servant upon whom We bestowed favor" (43:59), his sonship denied while his prophetic and sign-value status is affirmed. Verse 43:61 adds an eschatological note — "And indeed, he will be [a sign for] knowledge of the Hour" — which classical exegesis links to traditions of Jesus' future descent as part of end-times events, distinguishing the Qur'anic Jesus from the trinitarian Christ of Nicene formulation while retaining his singular eschatological significance.

The polemic against filial claims about God reaches its most quoted formulation at 43:81: "Say, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], 'If

the Most Merciful had a son, then I would be the first of [his] worshippers.'" Al-Zamakhshari, in al-Kashshaf, highlights the rhetorical structure of this conditional sentence as a hypothetical premise deployed purely for polemical effect — establishing that even granting the counterfactual for argument's sake, the speaker's own devotion would remain unshaken, which paradoxically underscores the verse's certainty that no such son exists — rather than any actual concession of the proposition's possibility. This close reading, consistent with al-Zamakhshari's broader Mu'tazili-inflected attention to Qur'anic argumentative technique, is worth noting as a case where classical philological exegesis and modern rhetorical analysis converge.

The surah closes (43:84–89) with a tawhid formula affirming God's singular divinity "in the heaven" and "on the earth," alongside a passage (43:79–80) reassuring the Prophet that God hears the disbelievers' secret plotting, and the surah's final verses record the Prophet's own words of complaint about his people's disbelief, met with divine counsel of patience (43:89).

Surah Ad-Dukhan (44): the Night of Decree, the "smoke," and Pharaoh revisited

Ad-Dukhan is short (fifty-nine verses) and thematically unified. It opens by locating its revelation within "a blessed night" (44:3), generally identified in the classical tradition with Laylat al-Qadr, the Night of Decree, and linked to the broader corpus of Ramadan hadith in Bukhari and Muslim — though al-Tabari notes a minority early view associating the phrase instead with mid-Sha'ban, a position rejected by the great majority of later exegetes.

The surah's most debated passage is the "smoke" sequence, 44:10–16: "Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke, covering the people; this is a painful torment. [They will say], 'Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.' How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? ... Indeed, We will remove the torment for a little. Indeed, you [disbelievers] will return [to disbelief]." This is one of the more instructive cases in the classical tafsir tradition of genuine, unresolved interpretive divergence preserved rather than adjudicated. Al-Tabari, in Jami' al-Bayan, transmits reports via 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud identifying the "smoke"

with a severe drought and famine that struck Quraysh — a report also found in Bukhari and Muslim — understood by Ibn Mas'ud as connected to the Prophet's supplication against a recalcitrant Quraysh, after which Meccan leaders, including by some reports Abu Sufyan, approached the Prophet pleading for relief and invoking ties of kinship. Alongside this historicizing reading, al-Tabari also transmits reports treating the "smoke" as a still-future eschatological sign preceding the Hour, and he discusses grounds for each position without fully resolving the tension between them. This crux has become, in academic discussions of tafsir methodology, a useful case study of how the earliest exegetical tradition could sustain two quite different readings of the same passage — one historical-particular, tied to a specific documented episode of Meccan hardship, and one eschatological-universal — without a single verdict displacing the other.

Verses 44:17–33 then retell the Exodus narrative in compressed form — Pharaoh's arrogance, Moses' appeal ("Send with me the servants of Allah," 44:18), the crossing of the sea left "as it was, calm" as a sign for those who would come after (44:24–25), and the summary judgment on Pharaoh's court: "How much they left behind of gardens and springs... Thus. And We caused to inherit it another people" (44:25–28). The passage functions, as elsewhere in this juz', as a comparative precedent-narrative directed at the immediate audience of Quraysh.

The surah closes with contrasted eschatological scenes: the Zaqqum tree, described as food "like murky oil" that boils in the stomach "like the boiling of scalding water" (44:43–46), set against the gardens, silk garments, and paired companions promised to the righteous (44:51–57), the whole concluding with a restatement of the Qur'an's ease of understanding (44:58) and a closing command to "watch; indeed, they are watching [awaiting a change in fortune]" (44:59).

Surah al-Jathiyah (45:1–37): cosmic signs, the People of the Book, and the fatalists

Al-Jathiyah — "The Kneeling," named for its Judgment-Day imagery — opens (45:3–5) with a catalogue of cosmic and biological signs comparable to those found throughout the Meccan corpus: the heavens and earth, the creation of

humanity itself, "the difference of night and day," and provision sent down by God reviving dead earth — all presented as "signs for a people who reason" and "who are certain [in faith]," the recurring refrain distinguishing rational conviction from mere assent.

Verses 45:16–17 turn to the People of the Book: "And We did certainly give the Children of Israel the Scripture and judgment and prophethood, and We provided them with good things and preferred them over the worlds. And We gave them clear proofs of the matter [of religion]. And they did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves." The passage attributes communal division not to any deficiency of revealed knowledge but to envy among those who already possessed it — a diagnosis structurally parallel to 42:14's account of division among earlier communities, reinforcing the surah cluster's recurring thesis that sectarian fragmentation is a moral rather than epistemic failure.

Verse 45:18 then addresses Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him directly: "Then We put you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], on an ordained way [shari'ah] concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it." This is among the relatively few explicit Qur'anic occurrences of the term shari'ah, and it is frequently cited — sometimes with more weight than the single occurrence can bear — in discussions of the term's Qur'anic versus later juristic usage; here the word denotes something closer to a "clear way" or path of guidance in a general sense rather than the elaborated corpus of positive law the term came to designate in later Islamic legal literature, a distinction worth preserving against anachronistic retrojection.

Verse 45:23 delivers one of the surah's most quoted lines, an anatomy of self-willed error: "Have you seen he who has taken as his god his own desire [hawah], and Allah has sent him astray due to knowledge and has sealed his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after Allah? Then will you not be reminded?" Both classical ethical exegesis and modern discussions of moral autonomy have found in this verse a compact critique of desire (hawa) elevated to the status of an object of worship — an idolatry of the self rather than of stone or wood — compounded by the striking clause that God "sent him astray due to knowledge" (a knowledge willfully misused rather than absent), a formulation

that resists any simple determinist reading by locating the sealing of the heart as consequent upon, rather than prior to, the individual's own choice.

Verse 45:24 preserves a genuinely rare data-point regarding pre-Islamic Arabian skepticism: "And they say, 'There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time [dahr].'" Scholars of Jahiliyya religion, building on Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic studies of Qur'anic vocabulary, treat this verse as one of the clearest direct testimonies within the Qur'an itself to the dahriyya position — a fatalist or materialist strand of pre-Islamic thought that denied resurrection and personal divine agency, attributing mortality instead to impersonal "time." The verse's importance lies precisely in its rarity: unlike the recurring polytheist interlocutor addressed throughout the Meccan corpus, this passage records what appears to be a distinct, more radically skeptical position, met by the Qur'an's blunt reply that "they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming" (45:24).

The surah's closing movement (45:26–37) returns to Judgment-Day imagery, providing the surah's title verse: "And you will see every nation kneeling [jathiyah, from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record..." (45:28). Each community is here depicted as summoned individually to answer for its own recorded deeds, a scene of collective yet individually accountable reckoning, and the juz' closes with a doxological affirmation of divine sovereignty over the heavens and earth and "greatness" (kibriya') belonging to God alone (45:36–37), a fitting cadence for a section of scripture built so consistently around the vindication of tawhid.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, Juz' 25 exhibits the argumentative density and self-referential character that Neuwirth and Sinai attribute to the Hawamim cluster: it repeatedly pauses to characterize its own Arabic clarity and heavenly origin (Ash-Shura 42:7, Az-Zukhruf 43:3–4), even as it deploys that self-authorization in service of a sustained polemic against Meccan objections — ancestral custom, wealth-based credentialing, mockery of shared prophetic figures like Jesus — that the text explicitly frames as recurring rather than novel. Running beneath the polemic is a consistent

ethical current: the valorization of forgiveness over retaliation (42:40–43), consultation as communal virtue (42:38), and the diagnosis of both sectarian division (42:14, 45:16–17) and individual error (45:23) as moral rather than merely intellectual failures. The juz' closes, fittingly, on the same note it opens with in Fussilat's final verses — human beings confronted with signs both cosmic and internal, called to kneel before a reckoning whose reality the preceding four surahs have argued for from nearly every conceivable angle: cosmological, historical, rhetorical, and psychological.

Juz’ 26: Surah al-Ahqaf 46:1 — Surah adh-Dhariyat 51:30

Surah al-Ahqaf 46:1 through Surah adh-Dhariyat 51:30

Juz' 26 opens near the close of the Meccan revelation and carries the reader across a decisive threshold into the heart of the Medinan community's legal and social formation, before returning at its end to a Meccan eschatological register. It comprises the whole of Surat al-Ahqaf (46), Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him (47), al-Fath (48), and al-Hujurat (49), together with the whole of Qaf (50) and the opening thirty verses of adh-Dhariyat (51). The arrangement is instructive: al-Ahqaf closes out a cluster of late Meccan surahs with polemic against idolatry, a meditation on filial duty, and the destruction of 'Ad; Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, al-Fath, and al-Hujurat then move the reader into the concrete concerns of the nascent Medinan polity — war, treaty, and communal etiquette — anchored with unusual precision to datable events, above all the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah; and the juz' closes by returning to the shorter, oath-laden, refrain-driven eschatological style of Qaf and adh-Dhariyat, surahs concerned above all with resurrection, divine proximity, and the purpose of creation.

Surat al-Ahqaf (46)

The surah opens, as many Meccan surahs do, with an assertion of the Qur'an's divine origin and a polemic against the futility of the idols invoked beside God: "Show me what they have created of the earth, or do they have a partnership [share] of the heavens?" (46:4). The argument proceeds by demanding evidentiary warrant — scripture or transmitted knowledge — for the practice of associating partners with God, a rhetorical strategy recurrent across the Meccan corpus.

Verse 10 introduces a notable interpretive crux: "Say, 'Have you considered: if it [i.e., the Qur'an] was from Allah and you disbelieved in it while a witness from the Children of Israel has testified to something similar and believed while you were arrogant...'" A widely repeated identification in the tafsir tradition, including in Ibn Kathir, names this witness as 'Abd Allah ibn Salam, the learned Jewish convert to Islam. Yet several exegetes, Ibn Kathir among them, note the chronological difficulty this creates: Ibn Salam's conversion is a Medinan episode occurring after the Hijra, while Surat al-Ahqaf is generally

reckoned Meccan. Some exegetical reports therefore leave the reference more general — a hypothetical witness of Israelite background rather than a specific, datable individual — precisely to avoid this tension. The verse remains a live point of classical debate rather than a settled matter, and it illustrates well how traditional tafsir sometimes registers its own internal inconsistencies rather than papering over them.

Verses 15–20 turn to one of the surah's most frequently cited passages, on parents and children. Verse 15 reads: "And We have enjoined upon man goodness to his parents. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months, until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, 'My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor...'" The verse fuses ethical exhortation — filial piety, gratitude — with a physiological time-marker, the "thirty months" of gestation and weaning combined. Al-Tabari and later commentators record a juristic use made of this figure: since Surat al-Baqarah (2:233) separately stipulates two full years (twenty-four months) as the complete term of weaning, some early authorities are reported to have subtracted the twenty-four months from the thirty specified here to arrive at a minimum gestational period of six months — a derivation attributed in some reports to certain Companions and later invoked in fiqh discussions concerning the legitimacy of a child born shortly after marriage. Whatever the precise chain of transmission behind this particular derivation, it is frequently cited as an example of intertextual legal reasoning within the Qur'an itself, two verses from different surahs read together to yield a juristic inference.

The passage continues with two contrasting portraits. The dutiful, mature man of verse 15 prays for grace to be grateful and for righteousness in his offspring; the undutiful son of verses 17–18 responds to his parents' warning of resurrection with contempt: "But he who says to his parents, 'Uff to you, do you promise me that I will be brought forth [from the earth] when generations before me have already passed on [without returning]?'... Those are the ones upon whom the word has come into effect..." Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both transmit variant reports linking this figure to a relative of a particular Companion — in some transmissions associated with 'Abd al-

Rahman ibn Abi Bakr — but both scholars caution that the chains and application of such reports are weak or overly particular, and that the sounder position treats the verse as addressing a general moral type rather than resting on a fixed historical identification.

Verses 21–28 recount the destruction of 'Ad, the people of the prophet Hud, situated at al-ahqaf, the sand dunes that give the surah its name. The people demand punishment rather than heed the warning; they see an approaching cloud and mistake it, in their eagerness for rain, for a beneficial storm — "This is a cloud bringing us rain!" "Rather, it is that for which you were impatient: a wind, in which is a painful punishment" (46:24). The passage draws an explicit comparative lesson (46:26) that 'Ad had been granted greater means — hearing, sight, hearts — than the Meccans addressed by the Qur'an, yet those faculties availed them nothing once they persisted in rejecting the signs of God; might and resource are thus explicitly de-linked from divine favor, a warning transparently aimed at the Prophet's own contemporaries in Mecca, who possessed comparable confidence in their own strength.

Verses 29–32 present the well-known narrative of the jinn who listen to the Qur'an: "And [mention] when We directed to you a group of the jinn, listening to the Qur'an, and when they attended it, they said, 'Listen quietly.' And when it was finished, they turned back to their people as warners. They said, 'O our people, indeed we have heard a message revealed after Moses confirming what came before it, guiding to the truth and to a straight path...'" This is a pivotal passage theologically: it establishes jinn as an audience accountable to revelation, capable of belief, and functioning — like human converts — as missionaries to their own kind. Several sira reports, transmitted among others via Ibn Abbas, connect this episode to the Prophet's return journey from his difficult and rejected mission to the city of Ta'if, when, according to these accounts, a group of jinn overheard him reciting in prayer near a place called Nakhla. It should be noted, however, that this Ta'if connection derives from hadith and sira elaboration rather than from the Qur'anic text itself, and its precise relationship — chronological and thematic — to the fuller jinn narrative of Surat al-Jinn (72) is a matter

scholars continue to discuss rather than one on which the sources speak with one voice.

The surah's argument from analogy follows in verse 33 — the One who created the heavens and earth without fatigue is surely able to give life to the dead — before closing with verse 35, among the most frequently cited verses of the surah: "So be patient, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], as were those of determination [ulu al-'azm] among the messengers, and do not be impatient for them." The phrase ulu al-'azm ("possessors of resolve" or "steadfastness") has generated extensive exegetical discussion over which prophets specifically are intended by the designation — discussions that most commonly converge, on the basis of other Qur'anic passages naming prophets together (e.g., Q33:7), on Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him himself, though the term's precise scope is not settled by the verse in isolation.

Surat Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him (47)

This surah, generally reckoned early Medinan, moves the reader decisively into the register of communal conflict and internal dissent. It opens (47:1–3) with a statement that the deeds of disbelievers who obstruct others from God's path come to nothing, while believers' deeds are set right — a contrast most classical commentators read as targeting the Meccan opposition, with some traditions applying it specifically to those slain fighting against the Muslims at Badr.

Verses 4–6 contain some of the Qur'an's most closely scrutinized material on the conduct of war: "So when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favor afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens." Al-Qurtubi situates this passage within the wider corpus of Qur'anic and juristic material on prisoners of war, noting genuine disagreement among the legal schools over whether the options of manumission or ransom remain permanently available to a Muslim commander or whether some jurists understood them as later qualified by other texts addressing jihad. Modern scholarship on this passage — a point on which contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim academic treatments largely

agree — cautions against extracting the verse as a free-standing, general injunction abstracted from its specific historical setting: the passage addresses an active state of armed hostilities between the nascent Medinan community and forces arrayed against it, not warfare in the abstract or peacetime relations. This is a matter of ongoing interpretive discussion rather than settled consensus, and both classical juristic debate and modern historical-critical caution are worth registering side by side.

Verses 7–19 continue with exhortations contrasting believers and hypocrites, a description of the ruin of destroyed towns "more wicked than your town [Mecca] which has expelled you" (47:13), and a description of the rivers of Paradise (47:15) — rivers of water, milk, wine, and honey, offered as incorruptible in contrast to earthly counterparts. Verse 13's reference to expulsion is tied by the sira and tafsir traditions to the Hijra: reports describe the Prophet, on departing Mecca in 622 CE, looking back at the city with evident attachment, at which point the verse is said to have reassured him that the town driving him out would itself eventually fall or be overcome — though this sabab, like many, is transmitted with varying strength across sources. The passage also criticizes those whose "hearts are locked" against the Qur'an (47:24), a rhetorical figure recurring across the Meccan and early Medinan material for willful spiritual insensibility.

Verses 20–38 sustain a single thematic block on the reluctance of hypocrites to engage in fighting when it is prescribed, their fear "as if death had come upon them" (47:20), and closing exhortations to spend generously in God's cause, with a warning that those who turn away risk being replaced by "a people other than yourselves" who will not resemble them (47:38) — a passage generally read as directed at wartime discipline and the specific phenomenon of nifaq (hypocrisy) within the early community, rather than as abstract moral instruction detached from that setting.

Surat al-Fath (48)

Few passages in the Qur'an correlate as precisely with an externally attested historical event as the opening of Surat al-Fath does with the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, concluded in Dhu al-Qa'da of the sixth year after the Hijra. The surah opens: "Indeed, We have given you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be

Upon Him], a clear conquest (fathan mubina). That Allah may forgive for you what preceded of your sin and what will follow and complete His favor upon you and guide you to a straight path" (48:1–2). Az-Zamakhshari's rhetorical treatment highlights the paradox embedded in this opening: the treaty of Hudaybiyyah, on its face, appeared to concede substantial ground to the Meccans — the Muslims were turned back from performing the pilgrimage that year, and the terms included provisions the Companions found humiliating — yet the Qur'an announces it immediately as a "clear victory." Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim record that the Prophet recited these opening verses to his Companions on the return journey from Hudaybiyyah, and that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab reportedly questioned how an agreement that seemed so unfavorable could be termed a victory — a hadith that vividly documents the surah's immediate and somewhat startled reception among those who had just lived through the episode it describes. This close correlation of text to a datable, externally corroborated event makes al-Fath a frequently cited test case in academic discussions of Qur'anic historicity and the relationship between Qur'anic text and sira narrative.

Verses 4–9 continue the theme, describing God's sending down of sakina, "tranquility," into the hearts of the believers (48:4), promising future victories, and describing the Prophet's role as "witness and bringer of good tidings and warner" (48:8).

Verses 10 and 18 concern the Pledge of Ridwan, the oath of allegiance sworn by the Companions beneath a tree at Hudaybiyyah, prompted, per the sira accounts, by a rumor — later shown false — that 'Uthman ibn 'Affan had been killed while negotiating with the Meccans on the Muslims' behalf. Verse 10 states: "Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him] — they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands..." Verse 18 confirms God's pleasure with the believers who "pledged allegiance to you under the tree," a passage that came to be regarded, in later Islamic memory, as marking out those present at Hudaybiyyah as a distinguished cohort among the Companions.

Verses 11–17 address the Bedouin tribes who declined to accompany the Prophet on the Hudaybiyyah expedition, offering excuses for their absence

after the fact — exegetes commonly identify some of these tribes with groups such as Ghifar, Muzayna, Juhayna, and Ashja', settled around Medina, though the specific tribal identifications vary somewhat across sources. The passage promises the believers "much booty" (48:15, 48:19–20), which the exegetical tradition consistently links to the subsequent conquest of the Jewish stronghold of Khaybar, and it exempts the legitimately disabled from any implied reproach for non-participation (48:17).

Verses 24–27 describe God's restraint of the disbelievers' hands from the believers within Mecca itself, and the fulfillment of a vision granted to the Prophet of entering the Sacred Mosque in security, heads shaved, without fear (48:27) — a vision the standard sira narrative regards as fulfilled the following year in the so-called 'Umrat al-Qada, the "compensatory" pilgrimage performed in accordance with the Hudaybiyyah agreement's terms.

The surah closes with verse 29, a lengthy and often-cited description: "Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him is the Messenger of Allah; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration. That is their description in the Torah. And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers..." The verse's invocation of Torah and Gospel imagery for the community's description functions as a kind of closing seal to the surah, situating the young Medinan polity within a self-consciously scriptural lineage of communities.

Surat al-Hujurat (49)

Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, notes that al-Hujurat represents a distinctly social-legislative register within the Qur'an, regulating communal and courtly etiquette in a manner that contrasts with the polemical-theological character of the surrounding Meccan surahs in this same juz'.

The opening verses (49:1–5) address proper decorum toward the Prophet: believers are instructed not to "put yourselves before Allah and His

Messenger" (49:1), not to raise their voices above the Prophet's own voice or speak to him loudly "as some of you speak loudly to one another, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not" (49:2), and verse 4 rebukes "those who call you from behind the private chambers (al-hujurat, giving the surah its name) — most of them do not use reason," with verse 5 noting that patience until the Prophet came out to them would have been better for them. Al-Wahidi and later exegetes transmit various reports locating the occasion of these verses in specific incidents — involving, in different traditions, senior Companions such as Abu Bakr and 'Umar raising their voices in disagreement before the Prophet, or a delegation from Banu Tamim calling out loudly from outside his apartments.

Verses 6–8 introduce the widely cited principle of verifying reports: "O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful." This is commonly linked in the tafsir literature, including reports transmitted by al-Wahidi and repeated by Ibn Kathir, to the mission of al-Walid ibn 'Uqba, dispatched to collect zakat from Banu al-Mustaliq, who reportedly misapprehended the tribe's reception of him as hostile and returned with an unverified report of their rebellion or apostasy, prompting the Prophet to consider a punitive response before clarification established the true situation. This sabab is widely repeated across sources, though its isnad is treated unevenly, and it is best regarded as a documented but not uniformly authenticated tradition rather than settled historical fact.

Verses 9–10 address reconciliation between disputing believers: "And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until it returns to the ordinance of Allah... The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers." Exegetes commonly connect this to a specific dispute the Prophet was asked to mediate between factions among the Ansar in Medina, though the precise identification of the parties varies across reports. The verse's declaration of universal fraternity among believers ("innama al-mu'minuna ikhwatun")

became a foundational textual basis in later fiqh for principles of communal reconciliation and arbitration.

Verses 11–13 form one of the surah's most ethically weighted sequences, moving from prohibition of mutual mockery ("let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them," 49:11) — linked by some reports to mutual taunting between delegations, in some traditions involving Banu Tamim, over matters such as former occupations or physical characteristics — through prohibition of suspicion, spying, and backbiting: "would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would detest it" (49:12), a vivid simile for ghiba (backbiting) whose graphic physicality is characteristic of Qur'anic ethical rhetoric. The sequence culminates in verse 13, among the most frequently cited verses in the entire Qur'an on human equality: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted." Bukhari and Muslim record that the Prophet, addressing the Quraysh at the conquest of Mecca, delivered words emphasizing that lineage confers no inherent superiority before God — a statement frequently cited alongside this verse in later tradition even though it was delivered on a separate occasion (commonly associated with the Conquest of Mecca or the Farewell Pilgrimage) and thus illustrates the verse's later practical application rather than constituting its direct occasion of revelation.

The surah closes (49:14–18) by distinguishing verbal submission (islam, "we have submitted," aslamna) from faith that has genuinely entered the heart (iman): "The Bedouins say, 'We have believed.' Say, 'You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], "We have submitted," for faith has not yet entered your hearts...'" (49:14). This is linked by exegetes to Bedouin tribes — variously identified, with Banu Asad among the groups mentioned in some reports — who professed submission to Islam while apparently expecting material reward or advantage in return, and it fits within the broader phenomenon of the wufud, the tribal delegations that arrived in Medina in significant numbers particularly in the "Year of Delegations" (9 AH) to declare allegiance, though individual identifications of the tribes named in specific

verses vary across the sources. The surah's final verses remind the believers that they do God no favor by their submission — rather God has done them the favor of guiding them to faith, "if you should be truthful" (49:17).

Surat Qaf (50)

With Qaf the juz' returns to a compact, oath-and-refrain-driven Meccan register. Angelika Neuwirth's chronological approach situates Qaf, along with adh-Dhariyat, within a middle-to-late Meccan stratum marked by short verses, dense clusters of oaths, and recurring eschatological refrains — a marked stylistic contrast, within the same juz', to the longer discursive legal-social material of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, al-Fath, and al-Hujurat.

The surah opens with an oath by the mysterious letter Qaf and "the glorious Qur'an" (50:1), swiftly turning to rebut the disbelievers' astonishment that a human warner has come to them and their incredulity at bodily resurrection: "Have they not looked at the sky above them - how We structured it and adorned it and [how] it has no rifts?" (50:6). Verses 6–11 marshal a chain of natural signs — the sky, the earth spread out, firmly set mountains, every kind of pleasant plant growing in pairs, and rain reviving dead land as "a resurrection" — as evidentiary analogues for bodily resurrection, an argumentative pattern Nicolai Sinai traces as intensifying across the Meccan corpus, where natural "signs" (ayat) drawn from rain, plants, winds, and ships recur as proofs of the resurrection's plausibility.

Verse 16 stands among the most theologically pivotal in the surah: "And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein." Al-Tabari's philological notes trace the idiom habl al-warid (the "jugular vein" or "neck-vein") in early Arabic usage as a conventional figure for extreme physical proximity, grounding the verse's striking theological claim of divine nearness in ordinary linguistic idiom rather than treating the phrase as an isolated or merely poetic metaphor. The claim of divine proximity is immediately paired, in verses 17–18, with the description of two recording angels stationed at a person's right and left, noting every word: "Not a word does he utter except that with him is an observer prepared [to record]." The tafsir-hadith literature elaborates

this theme with reports stating that the recording angels record every word spoken by a person, glossing the verse's brief description.

Verses 19–35 move through the moment of death ("the intoxication of death will bring the truth," 50:19), the Trumpet blast, and resurrection, with a notable dialogue in verse 27 between a person and his qarin — his attendant angel or companion — before divine judgment. The passage closes this movement with warnings to the disbelievers alongside glad tidings for the God-fearing who enter Paradise "in peace" (50:34).

Verses 36–45 draw a warning from the fate of destroyed prior nations — "how many a generation before them We destroyed, who were greater than them in [striking] power" (50:36) — before turning to console the Prophet directly: "So be patient over what they say and exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting... and in a part of the night exalt Him and after prostration" (50:39–40). Exegetes commonly connect this exhortation to fixed times of glorification with the five daily prayers, reading the verse as an early textual anchor for the practice of ritual prayer at appointed times. Hadith collections, including reports in Sahih Muslim, record the Prophet's practice of reciting Surah Qaf during the Friday sermon or in the prayers marking the two festivals — a report from Umm Hisham bint al-Harith recalls that she memorized Qaf directly "from the tongue of the Messenger of Allah" through his repeated recitation of it on the pulpit each Friday, evidence cited for the surah's early and sustained prominence in communal liturgical use. The surah closes on a note that is almost programmatic for the whole juz's eschatological material: "And We are most knowing of what they say, and you are not over them a tyrant. But remind by the Qur'an whoever fears My threat" (50:45) — the Qur'an's function as reminder rather than instrument of compulsion.

Surat adh-Dhariyat (51), verses 1–30

The final surah of the juz' opens with a cluster of oaths — by the scattering winds (al-dhariyat, giving the surah its name), the rain-bearing clouds, the ships that glide with ease, and the angels who distribute [each] matter (51:1–4) — invoked to affirm the certainty of the Day of Judgment and to threaten "the liars" (al-kadhdhabin, 51:10) who conjecture without

knowledge. Sinai's account of the developing "sign" rhetoric across the Meccan surahs is again pertinent here, as natural phenomena — wind, rain, sea — are marshaled as oath-objects underwriting eschatological claims, precisely as in Qaf. The passage recalls the destruction of earlier peoples, including Thamud (51:43), reinforcing the warning register carried over from the preceding surah.

Verses 15–19 describe the God-fearing dwelling amid gardens and springs, characterized by their scant sleep in devotion ("they used to sleep but little of the night," 51:17) and their generosity toward "the petitioner and the deprived" (51:19) from their wealth — a brief but often-cited ethical portrait linking eschatological reward to concrete practices of nocturnal worship and charitable giving.

Verses 20–23 turn briefly to the "signs" within creation and within the human self itself ("and in your own selves, then will you not see?", 51:21), reiterating in miniature the sign-based argumentation of Qaf before the surah moves to narrative. The remainder of the passage within this juz' (verses 24–30) narrates the visit of Abraham's angelic guests, who bring him news of a learned son and, by extension, prompt the astonished reaction of his wife: "So he brought them a fatted calf. And placed it near them; he said, 'Will you not eat?'... And his wife was standing and she smiled. Then We gave her good tidings of Isaac..." (51:26–28). This narrative parallels, with notable closeness, the account in Genesis 18:1–15 of the three visitors to Abraham and Sarah's reaction to the promise of a son in old age. Ibn Kathir's commentary on this passage draws on the Genesis account for comparative narrative detail — the roasted calf, the wife's reaction — a recurring feature of classical tafsir's engagement with Isra'iliyyat material, material Ibn Kathir himself elsewhere flags as requiring cautious handling. Modern source-critical and comparative-religious scholarship likewise notes the close parallel between the two accounts as part of the broader question of the Qur'an's engagement with and adaptation of earlier biblical and para-biblical tradition, converging with the classical tradition in registering the parallel while differing in interpretive framework and aim. The juz' portion breaks off at verse 30, mid-narrative, with the story's continuation — toward Lot's

people, Pharaoh, 'Ad, Thamud, and Noah — carried forward into the following juz'.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, Juz' 26 traces an arc from Meccan polemic and eschatological argument (al-Ahqaf's close, Qaf, and the opening of adh-Dhariyat) through the concrete legal and social demands of the Medinan community at war and in treaty (Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, al-Fath) to the ethical and constitutional texture of communal life (al-Hujurat). Several themes recur across this apparent stylistic divide. Filial duty and the moral formation of the individual (al-Ahqaf 46:15–18) find their communal counterpart in the fraternal ethics of al-Hujurat — verification of news, reconciliation, prohibition of mockery and backbiting, and the leveling declaration that human worth rests on righteousness rather than lineage (49:13). The theme of divine proximity and omniscience (Qaf 50:16) undergirds both the eschatological warnings of Qaf and adh-Dhariyat and the practical exhortations to right conduct running through the Medinan material, since accountability before a God "closer than the jugular vein" grounds both private piety and public ethics. And the juz's most historically anchored passage, Surat al-Fath's treatment of Hudaybiyyah, stands as a reminder — one on which classical exegesis and modern historical-critical scholarship converge in noting, if not in interpreting identically — that Qur'anic revelation in this period is deeply and traceably interwoven with the unfolding political and military circumstances of the Prophet's community, even as the text consistently frames those circumstances within a larger theological argument about patience, resurrection, and the sole worship of God that will find its most concise expression in the following juz's declaration that jinn and humankind were created for no purpose but to worship their Lord.

Juz’ 27: Surah adh-Dhariyat 51:31 — Surah al-Hadid 57:29

Surah adh-Dhariyat 51:31 through Surah al-Hadid 57:29

Juz' 27 opens midway through Surah adh-Dhariyat, moves through four short, rhythmically intense Meccan surahs (at-Tur, an-Najm, al-Qamar, ar-Rahman) devoted overwhelmingly to eschatology, divine signs, and the vindication of prophecy, continues through the sweeping tripartite vision of the Hereafter in al-Waqi'ah, and concludes with the opening portion of al-Hadid, the first of the Qur'an's "Musabbihat" surahs and an early Medinan text that pivots the discourse toward wealth, community, and the continuity of prophetic revelation from earlier scriptures. Thematically, the juz' is bound together by the problem of resurrection and its proofs, the authentication of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophetic experience against contemporary accusations, and — in its final surah — the ethical implications of monotheism for social and economic life. The material is drawn almost entirely from the middle-to-late Meccan period (with al-Hadid a significant Medinan exception), and its formal features — oath clusters, refrains, brief retribution narratives — have been closely studied both by classical exegetes and by modern scholars of Qur'anic form and chronology such as Angelika Neuwirth and Nicolai Sinai.

Adh-Dhariyat 51:31–60 (closing section)

The juz' begins mid-surah, continuing the account of the angelic visitors to Abraham that had commenced just before the juz' division. The angels, having delivered good news of a son, disclose their true mission: "We have been sent to a people of criminals... to send down upon them stones of clay" (51:32–33), a reference to the destruction of the people of Lot. The narrative then compresses a whole cycle of earlier retribution stories — Pharaoh, ʿAd, Thamud, and the people of Noah — into a few terse verses, each episode closing on the observation that a sign (āyah) was left behind "for those who fear the painful punishment" (51:37). This telescoping technique, typical of late Meccan rhetoric, functions cumulatively: the repeated pattern of warning, rejection, and destruction builds a rhetorical argument for the reality of the punishment awaiting the Meccan unbelievers, without requiring

extended narrative elaboration, since these stories had presumably already been rehearsed at greater length elsewhere in the Qur'an's proclamation.

The section closes with the celebrated purpose-statement of creation:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (51:56).

This verse has occupied a central place in Islamic theological reflection on the purpose (ḥikmah) of creation. Ibn Kathir, commenting on the verse, stresses that the exception clause does not imply any divine need for worship — God is independent of His creatures — but rather identifies worship (ʿibādah) as the very rationale for which jinn and humanity were brought into being; he supports this reading with the following verses (51:57–58), which state that God does not seek provision from His creatures and that He is "the Provider, the Firm Possessor of Strength." The verse thus functions as a hinge between the retribution narratives just recounted (illustrating what happens when the purpose of creation is refused) and the surah's closing exhortation to warn (51:55: "And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers").

At-Tur (Surah 52, complete)

At-Tur opens with one of the Qur'an's most striking oath-clusters: "By the Mount, and [by] a Book inscribed, in parchment spread open, and [by] the frequented House, and [by] the elevated ceiling, and [by] the swollen sea — indeed, the punishment of your Lord will occur" (52:1–7). Classical and modern commentators alike note the cumulative, almost incantatory force of these paired cosmic and cultic images (Mount Sinai, the heavenly Book, the Kaʿbah or a celestial counterpart, the sky, the sea) as building toward the categorical assertion that follows: the divine punishment is not merely possible but inevitable — "there is none who can avert it" (52:8).

The surah then turns polemical, rebutting a cluster of accusations leveled against Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophetic claim: that he is a soothsayer (kāhin), possessed or mad (majnūn), a poet (shāʿir) merely awaiting misfortune, or that the Qur'an is something he "invented" (52:29–33). Each charge is answered in turn, culminating in a rhetorical challenge: "Then let them produce their statement, if they should be truthful" (52:34) —

an early instance of the Qur'an's broader iʿjāz (inimitability) argument, developed at greater length elsewhere but anticipated here in compact form.

The surah's central section (52:17–28) offers an extended description of the righteous in Paradise — reclining on arrayed couches, paired with pure companions, served fruit and meat as they desire, engaging one another in easy conversation free of vain talk or sin — set in explicit contrast to the torment awaiting deniers, whose fate is described in sarcastic, second-person address elsewhere in the Qur'an's idiom for the doomed (compare the similar taunt at 44:49). The surah closes with pastoral counsel to the Prophet: to be patient, for he is "in the sight of Our eyes," to glorify God by night and at the setting of the stars, and to persist despite opposition (52:48–49).

An-Najm (Surah 53, complete)

An-Najm is exegetically among the most consequential surahs in this juz', chiefly because of its opening account of revelation and its later, historically contested reference to three Meccan goddesses.

The surah opens: "By the star when it descends, your companion has not strayed, nor has he erred, nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed" (53:1–4). These verses constitute one of the Qur'an's clearest self-referential statements on the nature of prophetic inspiration (waḥy): the Prophet's speech, when delivering revelation, is categorically distinguished from personal opinion, poetic invention, or erroneous judgment. This passage has served throughout Islamic intellectual history — and in modern academic discussions of Qur'anic self-understanding — as a key proof-text for the doctrine that the Qur'an's wording as well as its meaning originates outside the Prophet's own composition.

The following verses (53:5–18) describe a vision in which the Prophet perceived "one intense in strength" — traditionally identified with the angel Gabriel — appearing in his true form "while he was in the highest horizon," drawing near "until he was two bow-lengths away or nearer," with the Prophet's heart not lying about what it saw. The passage culminates near "the lote tree of the utmost boundary" (sidrat al-muntahā), beside which is

"the garden of refuge," at a moment "when there covered the lote tree that which covered it" (53:13–16). This imagery is linked in the sira and hadith literature to accounts of the Prophet's Night Journey and Ascension (al-Isrāʾ wa'l-Miʿrāj) — one of the more well-attested seerah connections in this juz', even as commentators differ on how literally to construe the encounter. Az-Zamakhshari's Muʿtazilite-inflected commentary leans toward a reading compatible with a spiritual or visionary rather than strictly corporeal encounter, a nuance of emphasis distinguishing his treatment from the more literalist reading found in Ibn Kathir, who draws on the fuller Ascension hadith material transmitted in the major hadith collections to anchor the vision in a concrete, physical event. Hadith literature also preserves reports that an-Najm was among the first surahs the Prophet recited aloud publicly at the Kaʿbah, with some accounts describing both Muslims and some Meccans prostrating together at its recitation — an episode of genuine seerah significance for the surah's early Meccan proclamation, even if the precise circumstances vary somewhat across transmitted versions.

It is this same recitation episode that later historians attach to the disputed "satanic verses" narrative, centered on 53:19–23: "So have you considered al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā? And Manāt, the third — the other one? Is the male for you and for Him the female? That, then, is an unjust division. They are not but [mere] names you have named them — you and your forefathers — for which Allah has sent down no authority" (53:19–23). According to the disputed report, preserved in some form by al-Tabari among the early historians and exegetes, Satan is said to have interjected words of qualified praise for these Meccan goddesses during the Prophet's recitation, before being corrected by subsequent revelation. Al-Tabari preserves several versions of this material, and later commentators, including al-Qurtubi, engage with it to varying degrees, but the narrative's historicity is heavily disputed; many later scholars, including Ibn Kathir, either reject it outright or heavily qualify it on theological grounds tied to the doctrine of ʿiṣmah (prophetic protection from error in conveying revelation), and modern critics such as Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him Husayn Haykal likewise reject it as historically untenable. Modern academic scholarship remains divided on the question, with scholars such as Uri Rubin among those who have examined the layered textual history of the reports, weighing the

tension between early sources that transmit some version of the story and the strong theological and textual grounds later Muslim scholarship developed for rejecting it. The verses as they stand in the received text are unambiguous in their rejection of the three goddesses as empty names without divine sanction, and the surah proceeds (53:23–32) to a broader argument about the limits of human knowledge, human beings' tendency to name what they do not know, and God's comprehensive knowledge of all — including forgiveness for those who avoid major sins while committing only minor lapses (53:32), a verse of some importance in later theological discussions of sin, repentance, and divine mercy.

The surah closes with a further oath-and-warning sequence recalling the fates of ʿAd, Thamud, the people of Noah, and the overturned cities of Lot, followed by a rhetorical question addressed to those who laugh rather than weep at the recitation of God's signs (53:59–62), ending with a call to prostration — associated in the exegetical tradition with a sajdah (prostration) performed upon recitation of this surah.

Al-Qamar (Surah 54, complete)

Al-Qamar opens with a much-discussed cosmic sign: "The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two]" (54:1). Classical exegetes, including Ibn Kathir, read this as a reference to a miraculous splitting of the moon witnessed by the Meccans during the Prophet's lifetime, cited as a sign accompanying his mission; the verse is followed immediately by the observation that even confronted with such a sign, the disbelievers "turn away and say, 'Passing magic'" (54:2), setting the surah's tone: however dramatic the sign, human obstinacy finds ways to dismiss it.

The surah's structural backbone is a refrain repeated four times: "And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember?" (54:17, 22, 32, 40). Between each iteration of the refrain, the surah recounts, in compressed form, the destruction of a rejecting people — Noah's community and the Flood, ʿAd and the "screaming wind," Thamud and the she-camel sent as a test (with the community's houghing of the camel triggering their destruction), and Lot's people, culminating with a final reference to Pharaoh's people. The recurring refrain functions rhetorically as

a kind of structural punctuation, inviting the audience after each narrative of doom to consider that the Qur'an itself — unlike the fates just described — is made deliberately accessible, its warning offered plainly and without excuse. The surah closes with a warning to the Quraysh that they are no better than those destroyed previously unless they heed the sign, and a closing affirmation that "everything they have done is in written records" and that "the righteous will be among gardens and rivers, in a seat of honor near a Sovereign, Perfect in Ability" (54:54–55).

Ar-Rahman (Surah 55, complete)

Ar-Rahman stands apart in this juz' for its distinctive hymn-like, liturgical structure. It opens by naming its addressee at the outset — "The Most Merciful (ar-Raḥmān) taught the Qur'an, created man, taught him articulate speech" (55:1–4) — before cataloguing an extensive series of divine favors manifest in creation: the sun and moon "[running] on a calculated course," the stars and trees prostrating, the raised sky and the balance He established so that "you not transgress within the balance," the earth spread out with fruit, palm trees, and grain, and (in the surah's second movement) the two seas that meet yet do not merge, separated by an unseen barrier — a passage sometimes connected in modern popular apologetic literature to oceanographic phenomena, though such connections lie outside the concerns of classical tafsir proper.

Structuring this entire catalogue — of creation, and later of Judgment and the two gardens of Paradise — is the surah's famous refrain, repeated thirty-one times across the surah: "So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?" (55:13, and throughout). Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both discuss the rhetorical function of this address, noting that the surah is explicitly directed to both jinn and mankind together (55:31: "We will attend to you, O prominent beings [thaqalān] — jinn and men"), making it one of the clearest Qur'anic passages addressing both categories of moral agents jointly and rhetorically pressing each, favor by favor, toward an admission of gratitude they cannot honestly refuse. The refrain's repetition — echoing across descriptions of astronomical order, agricultural bounty, human origins from clay and jinn origins from smokeless fire (55:14–15), and finally the torments of the guilty and the delights of the two-fold gardens promised to "he who

feared the standing before his Lord" (55:46) — builds a cumulative rhetorical pressure that scholars of Qur'anic form, including Neuwirth, treat as paradigmatic of the hymn-like register found among the middle-to-late Meccan surahs, marked by refrain patterns, parallelism, and liturgical cadence. The surah closes on the majestic formula: "Blessed is the name of your Lord, Owner of Majesty and Honor" (55:78).

Al-Waqi'ah (Surah 56, complete)

Al-Waqiʿah — "The Event" — opens with a description of the Hour's cosmic convulsions: "When the Event occurs, there is, at its occurrence, no denial of it" (56:1–2); the earth is shaken, mountains crumble to dust, and humanity is divided into three categories (56:7): "you will be of three kinds" — a division elaborated across the remainder of the surah's first half.

The foremost (al-sābiqūn), described as "those brought near [to Allah]" (56:11), are placed "in the Gardens of Pleasure" (56:12), reclining on thrones arranged in rows, served by immortal youths with vessels and cups from a flowing spring, amid fruit and the meat of birds, paired with maidens of wide, lovely eyes. Ibn Kathir's commentary on this passage draws on hadith to note traditions suggesting this foremost group is comparatively smaller among the later nations (the Muslim community) than among earlier ones, alongside considerable descriptive detail regarding the physical characteristics attributed to Paradise's inhabitants. The companions of the right (aṣḥāb al-yamīn) receive a similarly abundant but somewhat differently described reward — among thornless lote trees, extended shade, and flowing water (56:27–40) — while the companions of the left (aṣḥāb al-shimāl, also called aṣḥāb al-mashʾamah), by contrast, endure scorching wind, boiling water, and the shade of black smoke, eating from the bitter Zaqqūm tree (56:41–56). Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir both give close, word-level attention to identifying these three groups and detailing the specific rewards and torments assigned to each, treating the passage as one of the Qur'an's most systematic eschatological classifications of humanity.

The surah's second movement (56:57–74) shifts to rational argumentation for the resurrection, drawing a series of analogies from ordinary creative processes already familiar to its audience: the creation of human beings

from a drop of semen, the growth of seed-crops from soil, the provision of fresh water, and the kindling of fire from trees — in each case asking rhetorically whether it is God or humanity itself that is responsible for the process, and thus whether the same power that first created can plausibly be doubted with respect to re-creation. This argument-by-analogy is characteristic of Meccan disputational rhetoric concerning bodily resurrection and recurs, in variant forms, across other Meccan surahs.

The surah then turns to a striking oath and a much-cited statement on the Qur'an's transcendent status:

"So I swear by the setting of the stars, and indeed, it is an oath — if you could know — [most] great. Indeed, it is a noble Qur'an, in a Register well-protected; none touch it except the purified" (56:75–79).

This passage carries significant weight in both theological and juristic literature. Theologically, it is read as affirming the Qur'an's origin in a transcendent, protected Register (kitāb maknūn), inaccessible to corruption or tampering — a key proof-text for discussions of the Qur'an's preserved, non-human origin. Juristically, the phrase "none touch it except the purified" (lā yamassuhu illā'l-muṭahharūn) has become a central text in the debate over whether ritual purity (wuḍūʾ) is required before physically touching the Arabic muṣḥaf. Al-Qurtubi's treatment of this verse is a major source for this legal discussion; the majority juristic position, deriving partly from this verse in combination with supplementary hadith evidence, holds that touching the physical text of the Qur'an in Arabic requires a state of ritual purity, though the precise grammatical and theological weight to be placed on this verse alone (as opposed to the hadith evidence) has been debated, since some exegetes read "the purified" as referring to the angels who convey revelation in the heavenly Register rather than to human readers.

The surah closes (56:83–96) with a further threefold classification, now applied to the moment of death itself: for the one brought near, comfort, fragrance, and a garden; for the companion of the right, greeting of peace "from companions of the right"; but for the denying, error-prone one, "an entertainment of scalding water and burning in Hell" (56:92–94) — before

the surah's concluding command to the Prophet: "So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great" (56:96).

Al-Hadid (Surah 57:1–29, complete)

Al-Hadid marks a decisive shift in register: it is widely regarded, in both the classical asbāb literature and modern critical chronology (including the scheme associated with Nöldeke-Schwally as revisited by scholars such as Sinai), as an early Medinan surah, and its opening rhetoric, thematic concerns, and legal-ethical content differ markedly from the Meccan material preceding it in this juz'.

The surah opens with the formula that gives the "Musabbiḥāt" surahs their name: "Whatever is in the heavens and earth exalts Allah, and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise" (57:1), before offering one of the Qur'an's densest theological formulations:

"He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant [aẓ-Ẓāhir] and the Intimate [al-Bāṭin], and He is, of all things, Knowing" (57:3).

This verse — pairing awwal/ākhir (First/Last) with ẓāhir/bāṭin (Manifest/Hidden, or Outward/Inward) — has attracted extensive theological and mystical commentary. Sufi exegetes in particular have found in this pairing a scriptural warrant for holding together divine transcendence and divine immanence: God as both utterly beyond creation and intimately present within or beneath its appearances. Az-Zamakhshari and, in the modern period, Ibn ʿAshur both give the verse close grammatical and theological attention, situating it as a foundational statement of divine attributes that frames the surah's subsequent exhortations — since a God who is both First and Last, Outward and Inward, and comprehensively Knowing is one to whom human wealth, deeds, and secrets are fully exposed, a premise underlying the ethical demands that follow.

The subsequent verses (57:4–6) reiterate God's creation of the heavens and earth in six days, His throne, His knowledge of what enters the earth and what emerges from it, what descends from the sky and what ascends to it, and His being "with you wherever you are" — again yoking cosmological claims to an implicit ethical surveillance: nothing escapes divine awareness.

The surah then turns (57:7–15) to exhortation regarding wealth: "Believe in Allah and His Messenger and spend out of that in which He has made you successors" (57:7), and shortly after, one of the Qur'an's notable rhetorical questions on charitable giving: "Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He will multiply it for him...?" (57:11). Several tafsir works connect this appeal to the financial strain evident within the early Medinan Muslim community, and some sources associate it, without full consensus on a precise occasion of revelation, with reports of substantial charitable giving by prominent Companions — though as the sources note, no single, universally agreed asbāb al-nuzūl account fixes this connection definitively.

This section culminates in a vivid eschatological tableau (57:12–15): on the Day of Judgment, believing men and women will have their light proceeding before them and on their right, while hypocrites (munāfiqūn) will call after the believers, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light!," only to be told to "go back behind you and seek light" — whereupon a wall will be placed between them with a gate, its interior containing mercy and its exterior, facing outward, containing punishment. This imagery of separation by a wall (sūr) with believers' light extinguished for hypocrites has been read by commentators against the backdrop of the internal divisions and hypocrisy that troubled the early Medinan community, a concern voiced at several points across the Medinan portions of the Qur'an.

Verse 57:16 then delivers a pointed rhetorical rebuke:

"Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth, and [that] they not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient?"

Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both connect this verse to reports of a perceived softening or complacency among some believers as the community's circumstances improved following the hardships of the earliest period, though — as with the preceding passage — the precise historical anchoring of these reports varies among commentators and is best treated as a general contextual observation rather than a single, fixed occasion of

revelation. The verse's comparison to "those who were given the Scripture before" (generally understood as Jews and Christians whose hearts hardened over time) functions as both warning and comparative religious commentary, situating the Muslim community's spiritual trajectory within a pattern the Qur'an sees as recurring across prior scriptural communities.

Verses 57:20–24 offer one of the Qur'an's several extended similes for worldly life: "Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children — like the example of a rain whose vegetation pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes debris" (57:20). This simile, comparable to similar agricultural images of worldly transience found elsewhere in the Qur'an (e.g., 10:24, 18:45), is followed by teaching on predestined affliction — "No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being" (57:22) — offered as grounds for a disciplined emotional response to loss and gain: "so that you may not grieve about what has eluded you nor be overjoyed by what He has given you" (57:23), a verse frequently cited in later devotional and ethical literature as a scriptural basis for equanimity in the face of fortune and misfortune.

The surah's next major verse addresses revelation, justice, and material power together:

"We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people, and so that Allah may make evident those who support Him and His messengers unseen. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might" (57:25).

Ibn ʿAshur's treatment of this verse in al-Taḥrīr wa'l-Tanwīr situates it within the surah's larger rhetorical architecture, reading the triad of Scripture, balance (mīzān, i.e., justice), and iron as complementary instruments by which God orders human society — revelation providing guidance, the balance providing the standard of justice, and iron (material and military capacity) providing the coercive means by which just order can be defended

and maintained. This verse has also attracted attention in modern popular apologetic and "scientific exegesis" literature, which has sometimes drawn attention to the distinctive Arabic phrasing ("We sent down iron") in connection with the extraterrestrial or stellar origin of heavy metals like iron in astrophysical processes — an association that lies well outside the concerns of the classical exegetical tradition and should be noted as a modern interpretive development rather than a classical reading.

The surah closes (57:26–29) with a survey of the line of prophetic figures from Noah and Abraham to Jesus, culminating in verse 57:27's treatment of Christian monasticism:

"...And We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they sought] the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient."

Classical commentators, including Ibn Kathir, al-Qurtubi, and al-Tabari, read this verse primarily as commentary on the historical Christian monastic movement, generally interpreting it as criticizing a self-imposed asceticism that God had not divinely legislated for the followers of Jesus, while at the same time offering a qualified acknowledgment of sincere devotion among some monastics who are said to have failed to fully observe even the practice they themselves had innovated. This verse has functioned across Islamic history as a principal scriptural touchstone for Muslim discussions of, and often ambivalence toward, Christian monastic renunciation.

The surah — and the juz' — closes with a final address to the People of the Book: an invitation to fear God and believe in His Messenger, so that God will grant them "a double portion of His mercy," provide "a light by which you will walk," and forgive them, "that the People of the Scripture may know that they are not able [to obtain] anything from the bounty of Allah, and that [all] bounty is in the hand of Allah; He gives it to whom He wills. And Allah is the possessor of great bounty" (57:28–29). This closing note strikes a universalizing register, addressing the Jewish and Christian communities of

Medina directly and framing divine bounty as available to all who believe, rather than confined by prior communal or genealogical claim.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, Juz' 27 traces a coherent arc from Meccan proclamation to Medinan consolidation. Its Meccan surahs (adh-Dhariyat's close, at-Tur, an-Najm, al-Qamar, ar-Rahman, and al-Waqiʿah) are preoccupied above all with authenticating revelation and establishing the certainty of resurrection and judgment — deploying oath-clusters, refrains, retribution narratives, and rational analogies from nature to press a largely skeptical Meccan audience toward acknowledgment of both divine power and human accountability. An-Najm's account of the Prophet's visionary experience and the contested reference to Meccan goddesses situates this juz' at the center of enduring debates — both classical and modern — over the nature of prophetic inspiration and the historical reliability of certain early exegetical reports. Al-Hadid's transition to Medinan concerns — wealth, charitable spending, communal hypocrisy, the relationship between revelation and justice, and comparative reflection on Christian monasticism — demonstrates how the Qur'an's core theological convictions, once established rhetorically in Mecca, come to be applied to the concrete social and ethical challenges of a functioning religious community. Across both registers, the juz' returns repeatedly to a single underlying claim: that the God who created and sustains the cosmos, who is First and Last, Outward and Inward, is also the God to whom human beings — individually and communally — are answerable, whether through worship, gratitude for manifest favors, charitable expenditure, or humility before revealed truth.

Juz’ 28: Surah al-Mujadilah 58:1 — Surah at-Tahrim 66:12

Surah al-Mujadilah 58:1 through Surah at-Tahrim 66:12

Sūrat al-Mujādilah opens mid-chapter for this juz', so the discussion below picks up at its first verse; taken as a whole, this stretch of nine surahs — al-Mujadilah, al-Hashr, al-Mumtahanah, al-Saff, al-Jumu'ah, al-Munafiqun, al-Taghabun, al-Talaq, and al-Tahrim — is generally placed by chronologists of the Qur'an, including Angelika Neuwirth, in the late Medinan period. Stylistically the material is dominated by short, thematically compact surahs, several of which, as Behnam Sadeghi and others have argued, exemplify a "casuistic" legal register: rulings and exhortations that respond to specific, datable disputes within the Medinan community rather than laying out an abstract legal code from the outset. The juz' moves across four broad registers: domestic and legal casework (ẓihār and divorce in 58 and 65, the household episode in 66), communal politics and warfare (the Banu al-Nadir affair in 59, questions of alliance in 60), exhortation to unity and worship (61, 62, 64), and sustained portraiture of hypocrisy (58's closing section, and the whole of 63). Seerah correlations are unusually dense here, supplied largely by hadith and sīra rather than by the Qur'an's own narrative voice, which — as Uri Rubin and other historians of early Islam caution — is elliptical, so that reconstructing sequence and circumstantial detail depends on biographical literature compiled at least a century after the events it describes.

Sūrat al-Mujādilah opens with one of the most frequently cited verses on divine omniscience in the Qur'an:

"Certainly has Allah heard the speech of the one who argues with you [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], concerning her husband and directs her complaint to Allah. And Allah hears your dialogue; indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing" (58:1).

The classical occasion of revelation, transmitted in abbreviated form by al-Bukhari and more fully by Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i, and Ibn Majah, identifies "the one who argues" as Khawlah bint Tha'labah (also given as Khawlah bint Malik), whose husband Aws ibn al-Ṣāmit had pronounced ẓihār against her — a pre-Islamic Arabian form of repudiation in which a husband likened his wife to "the back of his mother," leaving her neither able to resume marital

relations nor formally divorced. Khawlah brought her grievance to the Prophet and, in a report attributed to 'A'isha and cited by Ibn Kathir, pressed her case (tujādiluka, "she argues with you," the source of the surah's name) so persistently and quietly that 'A'isha, seated nearby, could not catch every word — yet Allah, the opening verse stresses, heard it in full. Ibn Kathir reads this as a deliberate juxtaposition: human hearing is partial even at close range, while divine hearing is total, and this theological point serves as prologue to the legal ruling that follows.

Verses 2–4 then legislate directly on ẓihār:

"Those who commit ẓihār among you [saying to their wives, 'You are to me like the back of my mother'] — they are not [in fact] their mothers... And those who pronounce ẓihār toward their wives and then [wish to] go back on what they said — then [there must be] the freeing of a slave before they touch one another... And he who does not find [a slave] — then a fast for two months consecutively before they touch one another; and he who is unable — then the feeding of sixty poor persons" (58:2–4, abridged).

Al-Tabari's exegesis surveys the pre-Islamic custom at length and notes a broad juristic consensus that the sequence of expiations (kaffāra) — manumission, then fasting, then feeding — must be followed in strict order rather than chosen freely; al-Qurtubi elaborates further on differences among the legal schools over implementation, such as what counts as consecutive fasting or the measure of food owed to each of the sixty poor. Fazlur Rahman and other modern scholars read this passage as characteristic of the Qur'an's incremental method: rather than abolishing ẓihār outright as a social institution overnight, the text nullifies its harshest effect (the wife is not, in fact, akin to a forbidden relative) while attaching a graduated penalty that gives the husband a legally structured path back into the marriage.

Verses 5–10 pivot to a related but distinct concern: the ethics of secret conversation (najwā) within the community.

"Have you not considered that Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is on the earth? There is in no private conversation three but that He is the fourth of them, nor are there five but that He is the sixth of them... and then

He will inform them of what they did, on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed Allah is, of all things, Knowing" (58:7, excerpt).

This block warns against exclusionary whispering — conversation conducted so as to make believers feel deliberately shut out or aggrieved — and associates the practice with disbelieving factions who had earlier conspired against the Prophet in Medina, and by extension with the hypocrites (munāfiqūn) who resume it "even though they were forbidden." The claim of omnipresent divine awareness, even of gatherings of three or five, functions as a deterrent embedded in a broader Qur'anic pattern that links social ethics to divine surveillance.

Verse 11 addresses etiquette in the Prophet's assemblies directly:

"O you who have believed, when you are told, 'Space yourselves' in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, 'Arise,' then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Aware of what you do" (58:11).

Al-Wahidi and al-Tabari connect this to overcrowded gatherings around the Prophet, in which some Companions were reportedly reluctant to make room for others — among them veterans of Badr, who might otherwise have been left standing. Al-Qurtubi treats the verse as establishing a general principle of assembly courtesy rather than a rule confined to its original occasion, and its closing clause — that Allah raises "those who were given knowledge" by degrees — has widely been read as an early textual basis for the honor accorded to religious learning in the Islamic tradition.

Verses 12–13 present a curious legislative episode. Verse 12 instructs believers to offer charity before holding a private consultation (najwā) with the Prophet; verse 13 then relaxes this requirement. A report attributed to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, transmitted by al-Tirmidhi and cited by Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi, states that 'Ali alone acted on the instruction — giving a small coin before consulting the Prophet — before the rule was lifted, evidently in view of the hardship it would impose on poorer Companions. Commentators generally treat this as a rare, short-lived instance of legislative revision within the Qur'an's own textual history, illustrating the situationally

responsive character of much Medinan legislation that Sadeghi and others have emphasized.

The surah closes (58:14–22) with an extended polemic against the hypocrites, described as those who "ally with a people with whom Allah is angry" — read by most exegetes as a reference to Jewish factions of Medina or to those allied with them — who swear false oaths, use religious language to conceal disbelief, and are contrasted with true believers who "do not hold in love those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons." The closing verse introduces the phrase "the party of Allah" (ḥizb Allāh) for those firmly grounded in faith and destined to succeed — a phrase whose later career in Islamic political vocabulary considerably outstrips its comparatively modest treatment by the classical commentators, who read it primarily in its immediate rhetorical context of communal loyalty.

Sūrat al-Hashr, likely named for the "gathering" or "exile" (ḥashr) of its opening scene, addresses the siege and expulsion of the Jewish tribe Banu al-Nadir from the environs of Medina, an episode the sīra literature (Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham) generally dates to Rabī' al-Awwal, 4 AH, following an alleged plot against the Prophet's life.

"It is He who expelled the ones who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture from their homes at the first gathering... So take warning, O you who have vision" (59:2, excerpt).

Ibn Kathir stresses this closing clause — "take warning, O you who have vision" — as establishing a hermeneutical principle also noted by al-Tabari: that historical episodes recounted in the Qur'an function as models for reflection (i'tibār) rather than as neutral reportage. The following verses (59:3–5) address the destruction of the Banu al-Nadir's date palms during the siege, a wartime measure about which some Companions apparently had reservations; the text affirms it as permitted "by the leave of Allah, and so that He might disgrace the defiantly disobedient." Uri Rubin and other historians note that the Qur'an's own account here is terse and allusive, and that the fuller narrative sequence — the alleged assassination plot, the siege, the negotiated departure of the tribe — depends on sīra and maghāzī reports (Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi) compiled well after the events, a

methodological caveat relevant to any historical reconstruction built on this passage.

Verses 6–10 turn to the distribution of fay' (property acquired without battle), addressed particularly to the needs of the Muhajirun "who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah." Verse 7 contains a widely cited statement of prophetic authority:

"And what the Messenger has given you – take; and what he has forbidden you – refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty" (59:7, excerpt).

Verse 9 praises the Ansar's hospitality toward the incoming Muhajirun:

"And [also for] those who were settled in al-Madinah and [adopted] the faith before them... and give them preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul – it is those who will be the successful" (59:9, excerpt).

This verse is traditionally linked, via reports found in al-Bukhari and Muslim, to a Companion — identified in different narrations as Abu Talha or Thabit ibn Qays, with the precise household details varying — who gave away his own scarce food to a guest despite his family's hunger, an account that became paradigmatic in Islamic ethical literature for the virtue of īthār ("preferring others over oneself").

Verses 11–17 expose the hypocrites' hollow promises of support to the besieged tribe — assurances that they would fight alongside them or emigrate with them if expelled — which Allah declares will not be honored. The passage closes with the parable of Satan, who tells man "Disbelieve," but once the man disbelieves says, "Indeed, I am disassociated from you" (59:16–17, paraphrased), illustrating the pattern of instigators abandoning those they incite once consequences arrive.

Verses 18–20 offer a brief ethical-eschatological interlude: "O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow – and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do" (59:18), followed by the warning against those who "forgot Allah, so He

made them forget themselves" (59:19) and the declaration that "not equal are the companions of the Fire and the companions of Paradise" (59:20).

The surah's closing section (59:21–24) is among the most theologically celebrated in the Qur'an. Verse 21 reads:

"If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought" (59:21).

Al-Zamakhshari, working within a Mu'tazili-inflected rationalist framework, reads this as deliberate rhetorical hyperbole (isti'āra) — a vivid figure meant to shame a spiritually unmoved human audience by contrast with an imagined mountain's humility, rather than a literal claim about mountains' capacity for fear. Later Sunni exegesis largely retains this rhetorical reading while distancing itself from some of the broader theological implications Zamakhshari draws elsewhere from such figurative language.

The surah's final movement (59:22–24) enumerates the divine names at length: "He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful... He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise" (59:22–24, excerpt). Ibn Kathir collects hadith recommending the recitation of these closing verses morning and evening for spiritual protection, and treats the sequence as a comprehensive summary of Qur'anic theology proper — what later theological vocabulary would call tawḥīd al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt, the oneness of God as expressed through His names and attributes.

Sūrat al-Mumtahanah ("The Woman to Be Examined") opens with a prohibition against taking active enemies of the faith as intimate allies: "O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth..." (60:1, excerpt).

Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir connect this to the affair of Ḥāṭib ibn Abī Balta'a, a Muhajir who, shortly before the conquest of Mecca, secretly wrote to the

Quraysh disclosing the Prophet's plans in hopes of securing protection for family members still in Mecca. The letter was intercepted — according to the widely transmitted account in al-Bukhari and Muslim, through 'Ali and al-Zubayr — and the Prophet, once informed, pardoned Ḥāṭib in view of his earlier service at Badr. Classical commentators treat this passage as the primary textual locus for later juristic discussion of walā' (loyalty) and barā'a (disavowal) toward non-Muslims, while distinguishing the prohibition on political or military alliance with active enemies from the separate permission, stated later in the same surah, to maintain kind and just relations with non-belligerent kin and neighbors.

Verses 2–7 elaborate the rationale, invoking Abraham as a model: "There has already been for you a good example in Abraham and those with him, when they said to their people, 'Indeed, we are disassociated from you and from whatever you worship other than Allah...'" (60:4, excerpt). Verse 7 tempers the opening's severity by holding out hope of eventual reconciliation: "Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent, and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" — a verse commentators read as anticipating changed circumstances between Muslims and some of their Meccan adversaries, plausibly reflecting the historical trajectory toward the conquest of Mecca and the reconciliations that followed.

Verses 8–9 clarify the boundary of the prohibition: "Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes – from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly" (60:8). Several commentators connect this to a report concerning Asma' bint Abi Bakr, whose non-Muslim mother Qutaylah visited her in Medina; Asma' is said to have asked the Prophet whether she might receive her, and the permission to maintain kind family ties with non-belligerent relatives is associated with this incident.

Verses 10–11 address the status of women emigrants under the terms of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah (6 AH), whose literal wording might otherwise have required the return of Muslim women fleeing Mecca to their non-Muslim husbands; the verses instead clarify that believing women need not be

returned, a ruling exegetes connect to cases such as that of Umm Kulthum bint 'Uqba. The surah closes (60:12) with the "women's pledge" (bay'at al-nisā'), historically associated with the oaths of allegiance sworn by women after the conquest of Mecca: "O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not associate anything with Allah, nor will they steal, nor will they commit unlawful sexual intercourse, nor will they kill their children, nor will they bring forth a slander they have invented between their arms and legs, nor will they disobey you in what is right – then accept their pledge..." (60:12, excerpt).

Sūrat al-Saff ("The Ranks") opens with praise for those "who fight in His cause in ranks as though they were a solid structure" (61:4), a martial image of disciplined unity. Verse 6 contains one of the Qur'an's most doctrinally significant Christological statements:

"And [mention] when Jesus, the son of Mary, said, 'O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Aḥmad.' But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said, 'This is obvious magic'" (61:6).

Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Taḥrīr wa'l-Tanwīr, situates this verse within Qur'anic Christology and the broader Islamic claim of prophetic and scriptural continuity. Many Muslim exegetes have associated the promised messenger's name with the Greek term "Paraclete" (paraklētos) in the Gospel of John as a possible point of textual contact, though this identification rests on an interpretive argument about the underlying term rather than a direct textual correspondence in the extant Greek text, and Western critical scholarship generally treats it as such — a point on which Muslim and non-Muslim scholarship diverge substantially in both method and conclusion.

The surah closes (61:10–13) with an appeal to "a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment": "O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you should know" (61:10–11,

excerpt). Classical exegetes generally read this surah against a backdrop of military setback requiring exhortation to resolve, though the Qur'an's own text does not name a specific battle, and this contextual attribution should be read as plausible inference rather than settled fact.

Sūrat al-Jumu'ah establishes the obligation of the Friday congregational prayer. It opens by describing the sending of "an unlettered [ummī] messenger" among the Arabs (62:2) and, in verse 5, delivers a pointed simile against those "who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on": "the example of them is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]." Ibn Kathir reads this as a polemical rebuke directed at Jewish scholars of Medina who, in the Qur'an's characterization, possessed scripture yet failed to act on its guidance regarding the coming of a final prophet.

Verses 9–10 establish the surah's core legal content: "O you who have believed, when [the adhān] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu'ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew" (62:9). The closing verse (62:11) rebukes Companions who reportedly left a Friday sermon to join a passing trade caravan, an incident recorded in hadith as the occasion for the verse and a further instance of the Qur'an responding to a concrete communal lapse with immediate corrective address.

Sūrat al-Munafiqun offers a concentrated character study of hypocrisy, connected by exegetes to the return march from the campaign against Banu al-Mustaliq. The hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam, recorded in both al-Bukhari and Muslim, reports that 'Abd Allah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul remarked during this expedition that "if we return to Medina, the more honorable will surely expel the meaner" — a statement of contempt for the Muslim community that Zayd overheard and reported to the Prophet, prompting this surah's exposure of the hypocrites' inner disposition.

The surah opens with their false oaths: "When the hypocrites come to you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], they say, 'We testify that you are the Messenger of Allah.' And Allah knows that you are His Messenger, and Allah testifies that the hypocrites are liars" (63:1). Verse 4 offers a vivid physical simile — "and if they speak, you listen to their speech. As if they

were pieces of wood propped up" — and verses 5–6 note their refusal to seek the Prophet's forgiveness, turning away in arrogance. Verse 8, addressing Ibn Ubayy's remark directly, replies: "...honor belongs to Allah and to His Messenger and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know." The surah closes (63:9–11) with a general exhortation not to let wealth and children distract from remembrance of Allah before death overtakes one, broadening a specific historical rebuke into a universal ethical warning.

Sūrat at-Taghabun ("Mutual Loss and Gain") is shorter and more thematically diffuse, opening with cosmological praise of Allah (64:1–4), briefly recounting the fate of past disbelieving nations (64:5–6), and affirming the resurrection (64:7) against those who deny it. Verses 11–13 stress that no calamity befalls except by Allah's permission, and that "whoever believes in Allah – He will guide his heart," before verses 14–15 introduce a domestic caution anticipating the legal material to come: "O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them... Your wealth and your children are but a trial." The surah closes (64:16–18) with exhortations to fear Allah "as much as you are able," to spend in charity, and to trust in divine knowledge and power, functioning as a thematic bridge between communal exhortation and the domestic-legal material of the two surahs that follow.

Sūrat at-Talaq ("Divorce") constitutes, alongside al-Mujadilah's ẓihār ruling, the juz''s principal legal core. Verse 1 addresses the proper timing of a divorce pronouncement relative to the wife's waiting period ('idda), a ruling exegetes connect to a documented incident in which 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar divorced his wife while she was menstruating; the Prophet, according to the hadith recorded in both al-Bukhari and Muslim, instructed him to revoke the divorce and wait until she reached a state of purity not yet approached by intercourse before pronouncing it again, should he still wish to do so. Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, while treating this incident as illustrative, also observe that the surah's legal content is not reducible to a single case; it addresses reconciliation or final separation before two just witnesses (65:2), maintenance and lodging obligations during the 'idda (65:6), and financial responsibility proportioned to means (65:7): "Let the wealthy spend

according to his wealth, and the one whose provision is restricted let him spend according to what Allah has given him."

Embedded within this legal material is one of the Qur'an's most quoted verses of consolation and trust:

"And whoever fears Allah – He will make for him a way out. And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah – then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose" (65:2–3, excerpt).

Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir link this promise, in some reports, to the ransoming of a son of 'Awf ibn Malik al-Ashja'i from captivity through patient reliance on Allah — an account offered alongside, rather than displacing, the more general connection to Ibn 'Umar's divorce case. The surah closes (65:8–12) with a warning to communities that defied their Lord's command in the past, followed by a cosmological affirmation — "It is Allah who has created seven heavens and of the earth, the like of them" (65:12) — of divine knowledge encompassing all things, tying the domestic legal material back to the same theological horizon that frames the whole juz'.

Sūrat at-Tahrim ("The Prohibition") closes the juz' with a distinctive domestic episode addressed directly to the Prophet:

"O Prophet, why do you prohibit [yourself from] what Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the approval of your wives? And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (66:1).

The occasion of revelation, transmitted in variant forms across al-Bukhari, Muslim, and other collections, concerns a domestic episode in which the Prophet, having spent extended time with Māriyah al-Qibṭiyya (in one version) or having eaten honey in the apartment of one of his wives (in another, with the wife variously named as Ḥafṣa or Zaynab bint Jaḥsh), pledged to abstain from something otherwise lawful in response to jealousy or complaint among his wives, commonly identified as 'A'isha and Ḥafṣa. Hadith scholars note some tension between the "honey" and "Māriyah" narrations — both transmitted through sound chains, yet apparently describing two related, or possibly telescoped, incidents rather than a single

event, a point on which Sunni and Shi'i sources show some variation regarding the precise identities and details involved. Verse 3 refers to Ḥafṣa's disclosure of a confided matter to 'A'isha, and verses 4–5, addressed to "the two" (generally identified as 'A'isha and Ḥafṣa), constitute — as Ibn Kathir notes — a rare instance of direct Qur'anic address correcting the conduct of the Prophet's wives, distinct from the address to the Prophet himself that opens the surah.

The surah then broadens dramatically from this domestic register to general communal exhortation. Verse 6 delivers one of the Qur'an's starkest images: "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded" (66:6). Verse 8 calls for "sincere repentance" (tawba naṣūḥ) — "Perhaps your Lord will remove from you your misdeeds..." — and verse 9 calls for striving against disbelievers and hypocrites alike, completing the transition from the domestic opening to a communal register.

Verse 10 presents two negative female exemplars: "Allah presents an example of those who disbelieved: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous servants but betrayed them... and it was said, 'Enter the Fire with those who enter.'" This is followed immediately by two positive exemplars: the wife of Pharaoh, who prayed, "My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise" (66:11), and Mary, "the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into [her garment] through Our angel [Gabriel], and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient" (66:12). Al-Zamakhshari and later commentators read this closing pair as a deliberate rhetorical structure, balancing the negative examples of 66:10 with positive ones independent of marital status — the wife of Pharaoh remained righteous despite her husband's tyranny, just as the wives of Noah and Lot were condemned despite their husbands' righteousness. Commentators note the pointed relevance of this structure to a surah otherwise occasioned by domestic tension: righteousness, the closing verses insist, is a matter of individual moral standing rather than something transferable through marriage in either direction.

Taken as a whole, this juz' displays a Qur'anic style oriented toward the concrete governance of an established community: marital law reformed out of pre-Islamic custom (ẓihār, divorce procedure), the management of communal loyalty and enmity in the aftermath of specific military and political episodes (Banu al-Nadir, Ḥāṭib ibn Abī Balta'a, Hudaybiyyah), the disciplining of internal dissent (the hypocrites of al-Mujadilah and al-Munafiqun), and the regulation of communal worship (the Friday prayer). Threaded through this casuistic material are recurring theological anchors — divine omniscience and hearing (58:1, 58:7), the comprehensive enumeration of the divine names (59:22–24), and reliance on God amid hardship (65:2–3) — that root particular legal and political rulings in a consistent picture of an all-knowing, all-sustaining deity. The juz' closes, fittingly, by turning even its most intimate domestic material into a universal statement: that moral standing before God, exemplified positively and negatively by named women in the Qur'an's own account, is finally independent of social or marital circumstance.

Juz’ 29: Surah al-Mulk 67:1 — Surah al-Mursalat 77:50

Surah al-Mulk 67:1 through Surah al-Mursalat 77:50

Juz' 29 marks the Qur'an's turn toward its final and most compressed literary register, gathering eleven surahs—al-Mulk, al-Qalam, al-Haqqah, al-Ma'arij, Nuh, al-Jinn, al-Muzzammil, al-Muddaththir, al-Qiyamah, al-Insan, and al-Mursalat—almost all attributed to the early or middle Meccan period. Thematically the juz' is dominated by two interlocking concerns: an insistence on the reality of bodily resurrection and divine judgment addressed to a skeptical Meccan audience, and an unusually intimate window into the earliest phase of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's prophetic experience, including the onset of revelation, nocturnal devotional practice, and the psychological and social pressures of public preaching. Stylistically, the juz' is characterized by short verses, oath-clusters (qasam), rhetorical questions, and refrains—features that both classical rhetoricians and modern form-critical scholars treat as markers of an early, liturgically oriented compositional layer, in which cosmic argument and prophetic autobiography are woven into a single, highly compressed idiom.

Surah al-Mulk (67)

The juz' begins with a sustained meditation on divine sovereignty. Its opening verses set the theological register for the entire chapter: "Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is over all things competent - [He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving" (67:1-2). Ibn Kathir draws attention to the sequence in which death is mentioned before life, and described as "created," a formulation he reads as underscoring that mortality is not mere negation but a purposeful divine act, instituted so that human conduct might be tested and evaluated. The verse thus frames the entire surah, and arguably the entire juz', as an extended meditation on accountability.

The surah proceeds to invite reflection on the order of creation: God is described as having "created seven heavens in layers," after which the addressee is told, "Then return [your] vision twice again. [Your] vision will return to you humbled while it is fatigued" (67:3-4). This has often been

read, both classically and in later apologetic literature, as a rhetorical invitation to search for flaws in the cosmos and find none—an argument from cosmic coherence to divine wisdom rather than a scientific claim in the modern sense. The surah continues with descriptions of hellfire's roiling fury against those cast into it (vv. 6-11), a passage on God's knowledge of what is concealed (v. 13), and a closing rhetorical challenge: "Say, 'Have you considered: if your water was to become sunken [into the earth], then who could bring you flowing water?'" (67:30). This image of ordinary water, suddenly and irretrievably lost, functions as a concrete, universally accessible sign of dependence on divine providence, a rhetorical strategy characteristic of early Meccan preference for tangible, everyday phenomena over abstract argument.

Al-Mulk carries a significant afterlife in devotional practice. Hadith transmitted in the Sunan of al-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud, variously graded by later muhaddithun, describe the surah as "al-Mani'a," "the preventer," on the strength of reports that its nightly recitation shields the reciter from punishment in the grave—a tradition that accounts for its continued popular use as a nightly recitation.

Surah al-Qalam (68)

The surah opens with the disconnected letter Nun, followed by an oath: "Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe, You, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], are not, by the favor of your Lord, a madman. And indeed, for you is a reward uninterrupted. And indeed, you are of a great moral character" (68:1-4). Al-Tabari, surveying early interpretive opinion on the letter Nun, notes that some authorities took it to denote a cosmic fish said to bear the earth, while others regarded it simply as one of the huruf muqatta'a (disconnected letters) whose meaning is known to God alone; characteristically, al-Tabari presents this range of transmitted opinion without adjudicating between them. The passage's substantive content is unambiguous: it is a direct rebuttal of the accusation that Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him was possessed or mad (majnun), paired with an affirmation of his "great moral character" (khuluqin 'azim), a phrase that has anchored much later Islamic ethical and biographical literature on prophetic character.

The surah's middle section turns to a sharply worded description of an unnamed opponent: "And do not obey every worthless habitual swearer. [And] scorner, going about with malicious gossip - a preventer of good, transgressing and sinful" (68:10-12). Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both transmit early exegetical traditions associating this figure with a prominent Meccan notable, variously identified as al-Walid ibn al-Mughira or al-Akhnas ibn Shurayq; the identification is not agreed upon among the sources and should be treated as exegetical tradition attached to the verse rather than settled history. The surah closes with the parable of the owners of a garden who conspired to harvest their fruit secretly to avoid giving to the poor, only to find it destroyed overnight (vv. 17-33)—a passage some scholars have flagged as possibly containing later material within an otherwise early Meccan surah—followed by a warning against impatience modeled on the story of Jonah ("the companion of the fish," v. 48) and closing verses (49-50) describing the disbelievers' hostile gaze toward the Prophet, "as if they would try to bring you down with their eyes."

Surah al-Haqqah (69)

Al-Haqqah exemplifies the interrogative-eschatological style that Angelika Neuwirth and other scholars identify as characteristic of early Meccan rhetoric: "The Inevitable Reality. What is the Inevitable Reality? And what can make you know what is the Inevitable Reality?" (69:1-3). Al-Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf highlights this escalating, self-questioning structure—naming a reality, asking what it is, then asking what could convey its magnitude—as a rhetorical device designed to arouse awe and suspense before content is supplied, a technique distinctive to this eschatological register of Meccan revelation.

Having posed the question, the surah answers it obliquely through historical example: it recounts the destruction of Thamud "by the overpowering [blast]" and 'Ad "by a screaming, violent wind" (vv. 5-8), the flood that overtook Noah's people, and the ruin of Pharaoh and those before him "who committed evil" (vv. 9-10)—a sequence functioning as what form critics term a Straflegende, a "punishment narrative," in which past catastrophes serve as warnings addressed obliquely to the Prophet's contemporaries. The surah then shifts to the scene of judgment itself, describing the moment the record

of deeds is handed to each person—"in his right hand" for the fortunate, who exclaims "Here, read my record!" in joy, or behind the back for the doomed, who cries "Oh, I wish I had not been given my record" (vv. 19-29). The closing section (vv. 38-52) mounts a forceful oath-based rebuttal to charges that the revelation is poetry or the utterance of a soothsayer (kahin): "It is not the word of a poet... nor the word of a soothsayer... [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds" (vv. 41-43), reflecting genuine contemporaneous debate over how to categorize Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's recitations within existing genres of inspired speech.

Surah al-Ma'arij (70)

The surah opens with an unnamed questioner demanding the hastening of a promised punishment: "A supplicant asked for a punishment bound to happen" (70:1). It unfolds an extended description of the Day of Judgment's terrors—the sky becoming "like murky oil," mountains becoming "like wool" (vv. 8-9)—rendered with the vivid, elemental imagery found throughout the juz'. A distinctive contribution is its extended ethical passage (vv. 19-35), pivoting from cosmic terror to an inventory of the believer's character: steadfastness in prayer, "those in whose wealth there is a known right for the petitioner and the deprived," chastity, trustworthiness, and truthful testimony. This catalogue functions as a deliberate foil to the impatient, ungrateful human disposition sketched at the surah's outset ("indeed, mankind was created anxious... miserly when good touches him," vv. 19-21), a contrast that Fazlur Rahman's thematic reading treats as evidence that Qur'anic eschatology functions to ground concrete ethical seriousness rather than operating as free-standing mythology.

Surah Nuh (71)

This compact surah retells the mission of Noah in condensed form: his patient exhortation of his people "a thousand years less fifty" (v. 14, traditionally understood as nine hundred fifty years), his invitation to seek forgiveness and thereby secure rain and increase (vv. 10-12), and their obstinate refusal, met ultimately with the flood. Noah's own complaint to God is given directly: "My Lord, indeed I invited my people [to truth] night and day. But my invitation increased them not except in flight [from truth]" (vv.

5-6). Verse 14 additionally alludes to "stages" through which God has fashioned humanity, a phrase classical exegetes have read as encompassing embryological development. The surah closes with Noah's prayer against the persistent disbelievers and, in a note of personal tenderness, for his parents and "whoever enters my house a believer" and "the believing men and believing women" (vv. 26-28). Structurally the surah operates as a consolation narrative: Noah's centuries of rejected preaching, set against Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's much shorter but still painful experience of Meccan refusal, implied that prophetic rejection was a recurring pattern rather than a mark of failure.

Surah al-Jinn (72)

Al-Jinn recounts an episode in which a group of jinn, overhearing Qur'anic recitation, are moved to belief and return to warn their own kind: "Say, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], 'It has been revealed to me that a group of the jinn listened and said, "Indeed, we have heard an amazing Qur'an"'" (vv. 1-2). The narrative includes the jinn's prior practice of eavesdropping on heavenly discourse, now barred by "burning flames" or shooting stars (shuhub), which they report they used to occupy as "seats" for listening before this new vigilance was imposed (vv. 8-9). The surah closes with an emphatic declaration of exclusive worship due to God alone (vv. 18-19) and a statement disclaiming the Prophet's power to bring harm or benefit, or knowledge of the unseen except as conveyed to him by revelation (vv. 20-28).

Sirah literature, including Ibn Ishaq's biography as preserved by Ibn Hisham, commonly links this episode to the Prophet's difficult journey to Ta'if, undertaken after rejection in Mecca and following the deaths of Khadijah and Abu Talib in what is traditionally called "the year of sorrow." Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim transmit a report via Ibn Mas'ud that the Companions present during the Prophet's recitation did not themselves see the jinn, learning of their presence only through subsequent revelation rather than direct observation. Al-Tabari, in his commentary, transmits variant traditions on the location and timing of the encounter—some locating it near a place called Nakhla during the return from Ta'if, others placing it earlier—and notes that the sources differ on the precise chronology. Classical biographers

frequently draw an explicit contrast here: even as the Prophet met rejection among his own people, an unseen audience of jinn is reported to have accepted the message readily, a narrative counterpoint that biographical and exegetical literature treats as consoling.

Surah al-Muzzammil (73)

This surah opens with direct address to the Prophet in a mode of private intimacy: "O you who wraps himself [in clothing], Arise [to pray] the night, except for a little - Half of it - or subtract from it a little - Or add to it, and recite the Qur'an with measured recitation" (vv. 1-4). The address (al-muzzammil, "the enshrouded" or "wrapped" one) is understood by hadith scholars to correspond to the Prophet's domestic circumstance in the earliest period, when he would wrap himself in a garment, whether from cold, fear, or the physical intensity of receiving revelation. Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim narrate 'A'isha's account of the onset of revelation, describing the Prophet's return from the cave of Hira trembling and asking to be covered—an episode directly relevant to this opening address and to its companion surah, al-Muddaththir. The following verses explain the purpose of this nocturnal discipline: "Indeed, We will cast upon you a heavy word" (v. 5), preparing the Prophet, through sustained private devotion, for the weight of public prophetic responsibility soon to follow. Ibn Kathir records early reports that this nightly vigil was observed as a demanding obligation by the Prophet and his earliest Companions for a considerable period, later eased by the surah's own concluding verse.

That concluding verse (73:20) stands apart stylistically from the rest of the surah—markedly longer, more prose-like, and addressing circumstances (illness, travel for trade, armed struggle "in the cause of Allah") that presuppose a more developed communal life than the surah's opening context suggests: "so recite what is easy from it... Allah knows that some of you will be sick, others traveling through the land seeking of Allah's bounty, and others fighting in the cause of Allah." Ibn Kathir and al-Qurtubi both treat this verse as a later addition that eases the strict nightly obligation set out in the surah's opening, and Nicolai Sinai's academic treatment of Qur'anic chronology likewise regards it as an instance of redactional layering—an unusual area of convergence between traditional tafsir and modern source-

critical scholarship on the text's compositional history. Between these two poles, the surah's middle section (vv. 11-19) addresses warnings to the Meccan elite in terms recalling Pharaoh's rejection of Moses, framing contemporary disbelief as a repetition of an ancient pattern.

Surah al-Muddaththir (74)

Companion to al-Muzzammil in both address-form and traditional dating, al-Muddaththir opens: "O you who covers himself [with a garment], Arise and warn. And your Lord glorify. And your clothing purify. And uncleanliness avoid. And do not confer favor to acquire more. But for your Lord be patient" (vv. 1-7). This passage, together with the opening verses of Surah 96 (al-'Alaq), is traditionally counted among the very earliest revelations and is generally read as marking the transition from the Prophet's private confirmation of his prophetic experience toward the beginning of public proclamation—"Arise and warn" (qum fa-andhir) functioning almost as a formal commission. Sahih al-Bukhari, in the Kitab Bad' al-Wahy, records the hadith of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah describing a period of interruption in revelation (fatrat al-wahy) followed by the Prophet's renewed hearing of a voice from heaven, an event traditionally linked to this opening passage and thus to the commencement of public mission. Classical scholarship debates the relative priority of Q73, Q74, and Q96 as the first, second, or third revelation without full consensus.

The surah's most extended passage (vv. 11-30) addresses a single named type of opponent at unusual length, generally identified in tafsir with al-Walid ibn al-Mughira: "Leave Me with the one I created alone... Indeed, he thought and deliberated. So may he be destroyed for how he deliberated... Then he frowned and scowled; Then he turned back and was arrogant, And said, 'This is not but magic imitated. This is not but the word of a human being'" (vv. 11, 18-19, 22-25). Ibn Kathir's commentary draws on reports that al-Walid, asked by Quraysh to render a judgment on how to characterize the Qur'an ahead of the pilgrimage season—when tribal delegations would need a unified line to give visiting pilgrims—wavered through several possible descriptions (poetry, soothsaying, madness) before settling on "magic transmitted" (sihrun yu'tharu), a verdict the passage rebuts point by point. Ibn Kathir presents the episode as an illustration of willful rejection in the

face of recognized eloquence, since al-Walid was, by several accounts, himself struck by the Qur'an's rhetorical power before choosing a dismissive characterization for reasons of status and rivalry. The passage concludes with the warning that this figure will be driven into Saqar, one of the names for Hellfire (v. 26), followed by a description of its nineteen guardians (vv. 30-31). Classical commentators note that this specific number provoked mockery among the Meccan audience at the time; in more recent history the same verse has also drawn attention from popular numerological approaches to the Qur'an, a development well outside the scope of classical exegesis but worth noting as a documented instance of the verse's afterlife. The surah closes (vv. 32-56) with a series of oaths and warnings reinforcing human accountability before the Day of Judgment.

Surah al-Qiyamah (75)

Al-Qiyamah opens with a double oath establishing the certainty of resurrection: an oath by "the Day of Resurrection" and by "the self-reproaching soul" (nafs al-lawwama), the latter phrase becoming a significant term in later Islamic moral psychology, denoting the conscience that reproaches the self for wrongdoing. The surah insists on bodily resurrection in strikingly concrete terms: "Does man think that We will not assemble his bones? Yes. [We are] Able [even] to proportion his fingertips" (vv. 3-4)—an image chosen for its specificity, refuting doubt about resurrection by pointing to God's capacity to restore even the smallest anatomical details. The surah also voices disbelieving skepticism as rhetorical question, "he asks, 'When is the Day of Resurrection?'" (v. 6), followed by cosmic portents of the Hour, including the joining of sun and moon (v. 9).

A well-known middle passage (vv. 16-19) shifts from the eschatological to the Prophet's personal experience of revelation: "Move not your tongue with it, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], to hasten with recitation of the Qur'an. Indeed, upon Us is its collection and its recitation. So when We have recited it, then follow its recitation. Then upon Us is its clarification." Sahih Muslim narrates, via Ibn 'Abbas, that the Prophet would move his lips rapidly during the reception of revelation, anxious to memorize it before it might be lost, prompting this instruction to trust in God's guarantee of the

text's preservation rather than hastening its recitation out of apprehension. The closing section (vv. 20-40) contrasts those who "love the immediate world and leave behind the Hereafter" with the radiant faces of the blessed, "looking at their Lord" (v. 23, a phrase of considerable importance in later theological debate over the beatific vision), and the somber faces of the damned. It closes with an argument from embryology for the plausibility of resurrection: "Was he not a sperm-drop emitted? Then he was a clinging clot, and [God] created and proportioned him... Is not that [Creator] Able to give life to the dead?" (vv. 37-40)—a rhetorical strategy paralleling Surah Nuh's allusion to the "stages" of creation, using the observable process of human gestation as an analogical proof for bodily resurrection.

Surah al-Insan / al-Dahr (76)

Classified as Medinan by most traditional authorities, though this classification is debated by both classical and modern scholars, the surah opens with a reflective question on human origins: "Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned?" (v. 1). Nicolai Sinai's chronological scholarship notes that the surah's style diverges somewhat from the surrounding suras of this juz', making its dating text-critically more difficult than that of its neighbors—a genuine point of scholarly uncertainty rather than settled consensus in either direction.

The surah's central passage (vv. 5-22) describes the reward awaiting the righteous "who fulfill their vows and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread," feeding "the poor, the orphan, and the captive" out of love for God despite their own need, silently disclaiming any desire for reward or gratitude in return (vv. 7-9). Reward is depicted through paradise gardens, drink from a spring called Salsabil (v. 18, following an earlier undesignated "pure drink," v. 21), silk garments, and silver vessels and bracelets. This passage constitutes a locus classicus in exegetical and, particularly, Shi'i devotional literature: al-Qurtubi transmits at length, via earlier asbab al-nuzul and tafsir sources, a widely circulated report connecting the passage to a specific act of charity by 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and Fatima, said to have given away their only food to a poor man, an orphan, and a captive on three successive nights while themselves fasting. Al-Qurtubi transmits this narrative as established tafsir material even while noting the weakness of its

chain of transmission, a judgment generally shared by Sunni hadith criticism; the report retains substantial devotional significance especially within Shi'i exegetical tradition and is presented here as a contested rather than firmly established historical episode.

Surah al-Mursalat (77)

The juz' closes with a surah exemplifying the short, rhythmic oath-clusters characteristic of the earliest Meccan style, opening: "By those [winds or angels] sent forth in succession..." (v. 1), continuing through a series of parallel oath-formulas invoking natural and possibly angelic forces. Ibn 'Ashur's al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir reads such oath-clusters, here and elsewhere in the early Meccan corpus, as rhetorically calibrated to Arab audiences' cultivated appreciation of oratory and poetic form (fasaha), a genuine argumentative strategy suited to its cultural context rather than mere embellishment.

The surah's defining structural feature is its refrain, repeated ten times: "Woe, that Day, to the deniers!" (v. 15 and throughout). Modern form-critical scholarship, following Neuwirth and the earlier Nöldeke-Schwally tradition, identifies this repeated refrain as part of a broader pattern of liturgical-style repetition also visible in Surahs 54 (al-Qamar) and 55 (al-Rahman), suggesting a compositional structure oriented toward oral, communal recitation and cumulative rhetorical effect rather than sequential narrative development. Between iterations of the refrain, the surah surveys the standard eschatological signs marking the Day—stars extinguished, the sky rent apart, mountains blown away like dust (vv. 8-10)—paired with brief allusions to the destruction of "the former peoples" (v. 16) as precedent, and, in closing contrast, descriptions of the righteous "amid shade and springs, and fruits from whatever they desire" (vv. 41-43). A hadith recorded in Sunan al-Tirmidhi has the Prophet explain, when asked why he had aged prematurely, that Surah Hud and its "sister surahs"—traditionally understood to include al-Waqi'ah, al-Mursalat, and others depicting the Day of Judgment in similarly intense terms—had "grayed his hair," a report often cited in connection with the emotional and rhetorical weight of precisely this closing surah of the juz'.

Synthesis

Read as a whole, Juz' 29 traces a coherent theological and biographical arc. Theologically, it mounts a sustained, multi-angled argument for bodily resurrection and divine accountability—through cosmic order (al-Mulk), historical precedent (al-Haqqah, Nuh), ethical contrast (al-Ma'arij, al-Insan), and embryological analogy (al-Qiyamah)—addressed to a Meccan audience whose primary objections concerned not monotheism as such but the plausibility of resurrection and the legitimacy of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him's claim to prophecy. Biographically, the juz' offers rare, concentrated access to the earliest phase of that prophetic experience: the trembling return from Hira, the private nocturnal discipline of al-Muzzammil, the formal commission to "arise and warn" in al-Muddaththir, the anxious effort to retain revelation addressed in al-Qiyamah, and the contrasting receptions met among jinn and among hostile Meccan notables such as al-Walid ibn al-Mughira. Stylistically, the prevalence of oath-clusters, rhetorical questions, and structured refrains across nearly every surah in this juz' supports the broadly shared academic judgment—advanced by Neuwirth, Sinai, and consistent with the classical understanding of these suras' early Meccan origin—that this material represents a formative, intensely oral-performative layer of Qur'anic composition, in which eschatological urgency and prophetic self-disclosure are woven into a single, highly compressed literary register.

Juz’ 30: Surah an-Naba 78:1 — Surah an-Nas 114:6 (Amma)

Surah an-Naba 78:1 through Surah an-Nas 114:6 (Amma)

Juz' 'Amma, the thirtieth and final section of the Qur'an, consists overwhelmingly of short surahs traditionally assigned to the earliest phase of the Meccan mission. Running from Surah an-Naba (78) to Surah an-Nas (114), it comprises thirty-seven surahs marked by dense oath-clusters, rhythmic rhymed prose (saj'), urgent eschatological imagery, and terse creedal and ethical statements. Nöldeke's chronology and its modern revisions by Neuwirth and Sinai locate most of this material in the "First Meccan" stylistic period, prior to the longer discursive and legal surahs of the Medinan corpus, though a small number of texts near the juz's end are conventionally dated much later. Thematically, the juz' oscillates between cosmic signs of divine power, scenes of resurrection and judgment, historical admonitions drawn from destroyed peoples, polemic against Meccan social vice, and a handful of texts with clear biographical anchoring in the Prophet's own life. What follows treats this material with a mixture of verse-by-verse and passage-block analysis, according to the theological or historical weight of each unit.

Surah an-Naba (78)

The juz' opens with a question: "What are they asking (each other) about? About the great news, concerning which they are in disagreement" (78:1–2). Al-Tabari records differing reports on the referent of "the great tiding" (an-naba' al-'azim)—some early authorities read it as the Qur'an itself, others as the Prophet's mission, but Tabari favors the Resurrection, given that the following verses turn immediately to disputation over an event the Meccan audience found incredible. This opening rhetorical device—posing a controversial claim as an unanswered question before marshaling evidence—recurs across the juz' and is characteristic of the argumentative style Ibn 'Ashur, in al-Tahrir wa'l-Tanwir, associates with the rhetorical strategy of these short surahs for early oral audiences.

The surah then catalogues creation as evidentiary argument: the earth made as a cradle (mihad), mountains as stabilizing pegs (awtad), humankind

created in pairs, sleep as rest, night as a covering, day for livelihood, seven layers of heaven, a "burning lamp" (the sun), and rain sent down to bring forth grain and dense gardens. This is not description for its own sake; it functions as a cumulative argument that the God capable of such ordered creation is equally capable of resurrection and judgment—a pattern repeated throughout the juz'. The surah's second half turns to the Day of Decision itself: trumpet blast, hosts arriving in droves, heaven opened like gates, mountains set moving like a mirage. Hell is described as an ambush and abode for transgressors, who endure ages of scalding and freezing drink; the righteous receive gardens, vineyards, and well-matched companions. The closing verse—"Indeed, We have warned you of a near punishment, the Day when a man will see what his hands have sent forth, and the disbeliever will say, 'Oh, I wish that I were dust!'" (78:40)—ends the surah on the stark image of a creature wishing to return to inanimate matter rather than face reckoning, a rhetorical inversion of the creation-argument that opened the surah.

An-Nazi'at (79) and 'Abasa (80)

An-Nazi'at opens with a cluster of oaths sworn by angelic agents—those who "extract" (or, on another reading, wrest out) with violence, those who draw out gently, those who glide, race, and direct affairs—commonly read as referring to angels associated with death and cosmic administration, though exegetes differ on the precise referents. The surah briefly narrates Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh: Moses is commanded to go to a tyrant who "had transgressed" and to invite him to purify himself and be guided to his Lord, but Pharaoh proclaims himself the highest lord, and is seized "with the punishment of the Hereafter and the first [in this world]." The narrative excerpt is brief, cited illustratively rather than as extended storytelling, before the surah returns to eschatology, closing with the disbelievers' impatient question about the timing of the Hour and the response that such knowledge belongs to God alone.

'Abasa opens with one of the most discussed passages in the entire Qur'an: "He [Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him] frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man [interrupting]" (80:1–2). Ibn Kathir identifies the blind man as 'Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum, a Companion who

approached the Prophet seeking instruction while the Prophet was engaged with prominent Meccan notables he hoped might embrace Islam. The passage's grammatical subject is left in the third person rather than addressed directly as "you," and classical commentators have debated whether this indirection is deliberate rhetorical distancing. Ibn Kathir and the broader exegetical tradition frame the episode as a divine correction of a momentary lapse in prioritizing social status over sincere seeking, not as sin in the legal sense (the doctrine of 'isma, prophetic protection from grave error, is generally understood to concern matters of revelation and law rather than every instance of human judgment). The passage is frequently invoked in discussions of Qur'anic self-critique—its willingness to record and correct the Prophet's conduct being read by many scholars, both classical and modern, as evidence against the charge that the text was simply authored to flatter its bearer. The surah continues with a survey of human ingratitude toward the Creator, a brief meditation on the stages of embryonic development and divine provision, and closes with a vivid two-part Judgment Day tableau: faces "bright, laughing, rejoicing at good news," contrasted with faces "dust-stained, overcast with darkness"—the disbelieving, the wicked.

At-Takwir (81) and Al-Infitar (82)

These paired surahs open with extended sequences of cosmic collapse: the sun "wrapped up" (kuwwirat), stars falling and losing their light, mountains set moving, pregnant camels (a valued possession in the Arabian pastoral economy) abandoned, wild beasts gathered, seas "made to boil over" or burst forth, souls paired with their bodies or deeds. Within this catalogue in At-Takwir occurs the frequently cited verse: "And when the girl [who was] buried alive is asked, for what sin she was killed" (81:8–9). This is widely read as a direct reference to the pre-Islamic practice of wa'd al-banat, female infanticide, and is cited across both classical and modern scholarship as a Qur'anic condemnation of the practice, situating its abolition within the broader moral reform agenda of the revelation. At-Takwir closes by affirming that the Qur'an is "the word of a noble messenger," possessed of power, and explicitly rejects the accusation that Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him was possessed or that the message was the word of "an expelled devil." Al-Infitar covers similar ground—the sky splitting, stars scattering, seas

bursting, graves overturned—before turning to the recording angels (kiraman katibin) who note every deed, and to the stark declaration that "the righteous will be in bliss, and the wicked will be in Hellfire" (82:13–14).

Al-Mutaffifin (83)

This surah opens with a direct commercial-ethical rebuke: "Woe to the defrauders, who, when they take a measure from people, take in full, but if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss" (83:1–3). Al-Qurtubi's legal-exegetical treatment draws out fiqh implications regarding fair measure and weight in trade, connecting the passage to broader Qur'anic and hadith material on commercial honesty—a concrete instance of the juz's recurring concern with social and economic ethics rather than purely otherworldly matters, a point emphasized in modern scholarship, including Fazlur Rahman's reading of these short surahs as embedding substantial social critique. The surah then develops a bipartite eschatological structure: the record of the wicked is in sijjin, a term associated with confinement or a register of the base, while the record of the righteous is in 'illiyyin, a lofty register witnessed by those brought near to God; the righteous drink from a sealed, musk-scented spring, while the wicked who once mocked believers in this world will themselves be mocked, or find themselves excluded, on the Day of Judgment.

Al-Inshiqaq (84)

This surah continues the cosmic-collapse motif—the sky splitting and obeying its Lord, the earth stretched out and casting forth its contents—before arriving at one of the juz's pivotal statements: "O mankind, indeed you are laboring toward your Lord with [great] exertion and will meet it. Then as for he who is given his record in his right hand, he will be judged with an easy account and return to his people in happiness. But as for he who is given his record behind his back, he will cry out for destruction and [enter to] burn in a Blaze" (84:6–12, condensed). The imagery of the ledger placed in the right or left hand (or behind the back) becomes a fixed motif of Qur'anic eschatology, recurring in variant form elsewhere in the Qur'an and forming a structural expectation for the reader across this juz': human accountability rendered in the concrete, almost bureaucratic image of a handed document.

The surah closes with a rebuke of those who do not prostrate when the Qur'an is recited to them and a warning of painful punishment, tempered by an exception for those who believe and do righteous deeds, "for them is a reward uninterrupted."

Al-Buruj (85)

Al-Buruj opens with oaths by the sky "having zodiacal constellations" (buruj) and the promised Day, then recounts the "People of the Ditch" (ashab al-ukhdud): "Cursed were the companions of the trench, containing the fire full of fuel, when they were sitting near it and were, to what they were doing to the believers, witnesses" (85:4–7). The victims are burned alive by a persecuting party for no cause other than their belief "in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy." Ibn Kathir, al-Tabari, and al-Qurtubi record multiple narrations concerning this episode, including a lengthy hadith attributed to Suhayb (transmitted in Sahih Muslim) describing a boy, a sorcerer, and a monk in a tale culminating in the martyrdom of believers thrown into a fiery trench. Alongside this hadith-based narrative, the episode is also historically identified by many commentators with the persecution of Najran Christians by the Himyarite Jewish king Dhu Nuwas in early sixth-century South Arabia. Western academic scholarship has explored this possible connection to documented late-antique persecution accounts, treating the Qur'anic narrative as one of several religio-historical memories circulating in the region rather than a text that settles the historical question definitively; commentators themselves note the account's illustrative function—demonstrating that suffering for faith does not negate divine justice—over strict historical dating. The surah closes affirming God's power over creation ("it is He who begins and repeats," 85:13) and, in its final verses, describes the Qur'an itself as inscribed in a "Preserved Tablet" (al-lawh al-mahfuz).

At-Tariq (86)

A short surah opening with an oath by the sky and "that which comes by night" (at-tariq), glossed in the text itself as "the piercing star," followed by the declaration that "there is no soul but that it has over it a protector [angel who guards and records]" (86:4). The surah moves to a brief argument for resurrection from the process of human generation—"let man observe from

what he was created; he was created from a fluid, ejected"—before closing with an oath by sky and earth affirming the Qur'an as "a decisive statement" and not "amusement."

Al-A'la (87), Al-Ghashiyah (88), Al-Fajr (89)

Al-A'la opens with the imperative "Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High," moving through a description of creation and vegetation cycles (grass brought forth, then made into "black stubble"), and includes the assurance that the Prophet will be enabled to recite without forgetting, "except what Allah should will." The surah closes contrasting the transient nature of worldly life with the everlasting Hereafter, and notably states that "this is in the former scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses" (87:18–19)—an explicit claim of continuity with earlier revealed textual traditions, of interest in comparative scriptural scholarship. Al-Ghashiyah, named for "the Overwhelming [Event]," offers a further vivid contrast between abased faces laboring in a scorching fire drinking from a boiling spring, fed only from a bitter thorny plant, and joyful faces in a lofty garden with flowing springs, raised couches, and cushions "lined up." It closes reminding the Prophet that his task is only to remind, "you are not over them a controller" (88:21–22), a verse frequently cited regarding the non-coercive character of the early Meccan preaching mission.

Al-Fajr opens with a distinctive oath-cluster: "By the dawn, and [by] ten nights, and [by] the even and the odd, and by the night when it passes" (89:1–4)—exegetes offer varying identifications of the "ten nights" (commonly the first ten of Dhu'l-Hijjah) and the "even and odd," with the imagery functioning rhetorically as an invocation of temporal cycles preceding a moral argument. The surah then surveys destroyed peoples as historical admonition: 'Ad ("Iram—who had lofty pillars, the likes of whom had never been created in the land"), Thamud ("who carved out the rocks in the valley"), and Pharaoh ("of the stakes")—each condemned for tyranny and met with a "scourge of punishment." The surah then turns to social critique reminiscent of Al-Mutaffifin: "No! But you do not honor the orphan, and you do not encourage one another to feed the poor... and you consume inheritance, devouring it altogether, and you love wealth with immense love" (89:17–20). It closes with the well-known address to "the reassured soul" (an-

nafs al-mutma'innah), called to "return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing [to Him]," and to enter among His servants and His Paradise (89:27–30)—verses widely recited in funeral contexts, expressing confident hope in divine mercy for the faithful soul.

Al-Balad (90)

Al-Balad opens with an oath by "this city" (understood as Mecca) and by parent and offspring, affirming that "We have certainly created man into hardship" (90:4)—a statement of the inherent difficulty of human existence, followed by a rebuke of the boastful spender who imagines no one observes him. The surah's central ethical passage describes "the steep path" ('aqabah): freeing a slave, or feeding orphaned relatives and the impoverished in times of hunger, coupled with faith, patience, and mercy (90:11–17)—concrete social obligations framed as the arduous moral ascent that constitutes true religion, again illustrating the juz's recurring integration of otherworldly urgency with concrete ethical demand, a point stressed in modern scholarship against readings of early Meccan revelation as exclusively apocalyptic in focus.

Ash-Shams (91) and Al-Layl (92)

Ash-Shams presents an extended oath-sequence—sun, moon following it, day, night, sky, earth, and the soul itself, "and [by] its inspiration [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness"—culminating in the moral thesis: "He has succeeded who purifies it, and he has failed who instills it [with corruption]" (91:9–10). This concise formulation of moral responsibility as self-purification is illustrated by the narrative of Thamud's she-camel: the people are warned by their prophet (Salih, though unnamed here) not to harm the she-camel sent as a sign, but they "hamstrung her" and were consequently destroyed. Al-Layl contrasts two paths through similarly patterned oaths (night, day, male and female): the one who gives charitably, fears God, and affirms goodness is eased toward ease, while the one who withholds, considers himself self-sufficient, and denies goodness is eased toward difficulty—closing with the assurance that the most righteous, who purifies his wealth seeking only "the highest, [namely] the countenance of his Lord," will be satisfied (92:17–21).

Ad-Duha (93) and Ash-Sharh (94)

These two short surahs form one of the juz's most personally resonant units. Ad-Duha opens: "By the morning brightness, and [by] the night when it covers with darkness, your Lord has not forsaken you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], nor has He detested [you]" (93:1–3). This is traditionally connected to the fatrat al-wahy, a temporary pause in revelation that reportedly caused the Prophet considerable distress; Sahih al-Bukhari (hadith 4983 and parallel narrations) records that a disbelieving woman taunted him that his Lord had abandoned him, occasioning the surah's consoling opening. The surah continues with a rare moment of autobiographical reflection: "Did He not find you an orphan and give [you] shelter? And He found you lost and guided [you], and He found you poor and made [you] self-sufficient?" (93:6–8)—verses read as a direct reference to the Prophet's early biography (his orphanhood following the deaths of his parents and grandfather, and his subsequent economic and spiritual guidance), followed by the injunction not to oppress the orphan or repel the beggar, but to speak of God's favor. Ash-Sharh continues the consoling register—"Did We not expand for you your breast?... And We removed from you your burden... and raised high your repute" (94:1–4)—and delivers the well-known formula, repeated for emphasis, that "with hardship [comes] ease" (94:5–6), closing with an instruction to strive on after completing one task and to turn attention toward God. Both surahs are treated by the exegetical tradition as biographically anchored consolation texts arising from a documented episode of emotional and revelatory difficulty early in the Meccan period.

At-Tin (95) and Al-'Alaq (96)

At-Tin opens with oaths by the fig and the olive, Mount Sinai, and "this secure city," affirming that God created humankind "in the best of stature" (ahsan taqwim) then reduced the ungrateful to "the lowest of the low," except those who believe and do righteous deeds. Al-'Alaq holds particular significance as the surah traditionally identified with the very onset of revelation. Its opening—"Recite in the name of your Lord who created, created man from a clinging clot [or clot of blood]. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous, who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew

not" (96:1–5)—is linked by the sirah and hadith tradition (Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab Bad' al-Wahy) to the Prophet's experience in the Cave of Hira, his subsequent distress, and his consultation with his wife Khadijah and the Christian scholar Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who reportedly recognized the experience as consonant with prior prophetic revelation. The remainder of the surah rebukes a specific figure (traditionally identified as Abu Jahl) who forbids a servant of God from prayer, and closes with the command to prostrate and draw near.

Al-Qadr (97) and Al-Bayyinah (98)

Al-Qadr, though brief, occupies significant liturgical importance: "Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during the Night of Decree... The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months" (97:1,3). This is linked to the Qur'an's revelation beginning in Ramadan, with some reports connecting the surah to the Prophet's reflection on the comparatively long lifespans and worship-opportunities of earlier communities set against the brevity of his own community's lifespan—the Night of Decree offered as compensatory abundance, though the precise chain of this occasion is treated unevenly across the sources. Al-Bayyinah addresses the People of the Book and polytheists together, describing the "clear evidence" (bayyinah) of a messenger reciting purified scriptures, and includes a summary creedal statement of considerable importance in interfaith and legal-theological discussion: "And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give zakah. And that is the correct religion" (98:5). This verse is frequently invoked as a concise statement of the Qur'an's understanding of the essential content of true monotheistic religion, uniting doctrinal sincerity (ikhlas) with the concrete practices of prayer and almsgiving. The surah closes contrasting the fate of disbelievers among "the People of the Scripture and the polytheists" (destined for Hell) with believers who do righteous deeds ("the best of creation," destined for gardens beneath which rivers flow).

Az-Zalzalah (99) through Al-'Asr (103): a cluster of short eschatological and ethical surahs

Az-Zalzalah describes the earth's final quaking, its casting forth of burdens, and its "speaking" of what happened to it by divine command, closing with the memorable formula that whoever does an atom's weight of good or evil will see it (99:7–8)—an image of exhaustive moral accounting. Al-'Adiyat (100) opens with an oath-cluster on charging war-horses ("by the racers, panting... by the strikers of sparks... by the chargers at dawn"), pivoting to a rebuke of human ingratitude ("indeed mankind, to his Lord, is ungrateful") and love of wealth, closing with the disclosure of what lies within graves and breasts on the Last Day. Al-Qari'ah (101), named for "the Striking Hour," follows the pattern of Al-Inshiqaq's ledger imagery with a scale motif: those whose good deeds are heavy attain a pleasant life, while those whose scales are light face "an abyss," described as a "scorching fire" (101:6–11). Al-Takathur (102) rebukes "competition in [worldly] increase" that distracts "until you visit the graveyards," promising that certain knowledge and questioning about worldly pleasures await on that Day. Al-'Asr (103), among the shortest and most frequently cited surahs for its comprehensive ethical claim, states: "By time, indeed mankind is in loss, except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience" (103:1–3)—a four-part formula (faith, righteous action, mutual exhortation to truth, mutual exhortation to patience) treated across the tradition as a summary statement of the requirements for a meaningful human life.

Al-Humazah (104), Al-Fil (105), Quraysh (106)

Al-Humazah condemns "every scorner and mocker" who collects wealth and counts it, imagining it will make him immortal; such a person will be flung into "the Crusher" (al-Hutamah), a fire that "climbs to the hearts." Al-Fil and Quraysh are conventionally read together. Al-Fil recounts the destruction of "the Companions of the Elephant," traditionally identified with Abraha's expedition against the Kaaba, dated by sirah tradition to approximately the year of the Prophet's birth (c. 570 CE, the "Year of the Elephant"); the surah describes birds pelting the invaders with stones of baked clay, leaving them "like eaten straw" (105:5). Scholarly discussion continues regarding the precise historicity and chronology of this episode, since the Qur'anic text itself is brief and most narrative detail derives from later exegetical and sirah

literature rather than the revealed text; this is properly flagged as an area of documented uncertainty rather than settled historical fact. Quraysh reflects on the tribe's "familiarity" with the "journey of winter and summer" (understood as their trade caravans), presenting the security of these commercial journeys as a divine favor obliging the worship of "the Lord of this House" (106:3)—the two surahs together linking a historical deliverance (the repelled attack on the Kaaba) with an ongoing economic blessing (secured caravan routes) as grounds for gratitude and worship.

Al-Ma'un (107) and Al-Kawthar (108)

Al-Ma'un opens by identifying the one "who denies the Recompense" as the one "who repels the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor" (107:1–3), extending to a rebuke of those who pray but are heedless of their prayer, who show off, and who withhold small kindnesses ("neighborly assistance," or ma'un, the term giving the surah its name). Various reports attribute the occasion of these verses to specific hypocrites or a wealthy Meccan known for mistreating orphans, though the identifications vary across sources and are treated as traditions of uneven reliability rather than fixed history. The surah stands as a parallel to Al-Fajr 89:17–20, reinforcing the juz's recurrent linkage between eschatological belief and concrete social ethics—a point stressed by Fazlur Rahman and others against readings of early Meccan revelation as concerned solely with otherworldly matters.

Al-Kawthar, the shortest surah in the Qur'an, reads: "Indeed, We have granted you, [O Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him], al-Kawthar. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off" (108:1–3). A hadith in Sahih Muslim describes al-Kawthar as a river or pool granted to the Prophet in Paradise, expanding on the term's brief Qur'anic mention. The surah is understood as addressed to a specific taunt against the Prophet—reportedly that, lacking surviving sons, he would be "cut off" (abtar) and forgotten—answered by the assurance that it is his detractor, not he, who will be cut off from lasting legacy.

Al-Kafirun (109)

"Say, 'O disbelievers, I do not worship what you worship, nor are you worshippers of what I worship... For you is your religion, and for me is my

religion'" (109:1–2, 6). This programmatic statement of religious non-negotiability is associated in the exegetical tradition with a reported Quraysh offer of compromise—alternating worship of each other's deities for a period—though the historical chain for this specific incident is treated by scholars with varying degrees of confidence. The surah's structure, repeating the negation across present and (grammatically) durative forms, has been read as a categorical rather than merely occasional refusal, establishing a template for the relationship between the emerging Muslim community and Meccan polytheist practice specifically, distinct from later, more extensive Qur'anic and juristic treatment of relations with the People of the Book.

An-Nasr (110) and Al-Masad (111)

An-Nasr states: "When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest, and you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes, then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him" (110:1–3). Ibn Kathir transmits, via al-Bukhari, the report of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab consulting elder Companions including Ibn 'Abbas, who read the surah as intimating the Prophet's approaching death—an interpretation Ibn Kathir treats as authoritative, though not unanimous among commentators. Several early authorities link the surah's revelation to the period following the Conquest of Mecca (8 AH) and the subsequent "Year of Delegations" (9 AH), when tribal groups across Arabia entered Islam in large numbers, situating the text near the close of the Prophet's life rather than in its earlier phases—a rare instance within this predominantly early-Meccan juz' of material assigned to the very end of the Medinan period.

Al-Masad stands out as the only surah in the Qur'an naming a living contemporary opponent by kunya: "May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined, and ruined is he. His wealth will not avail him or that which he gained. He will [enter to] burn in a Fire of [blazing] flame, and his wife [as well]—the carrier of firewood" (111:1–4). Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir detail the specific occasion: the Prophet gathered the clans of Quraysh at Mount Safa to warn them of impending punishment, after which his uncle Abu Lahab publicly rebuked him, reportedly retorting, "Ruin upon you all day! Is it for this you gathered us?"—the surah's opening curse is read as a direct rejoinder to this confrontation. The episode belongs to the documented early, hostile phase

of the Meccan mission and represents one of the juz's clearest instances of a text anchored to a specific, named historical confrontation.

Al-Ikhlas (112), Al-Falaq (113), An-Nas (114)

The juz' closes with three of the Qur'an's most concentrated theological and devotional statements. Al-Ikhlas: "Say, He is Allah, [who is] One, Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent" (112:1–4). Az-Zamakhshari's Kashshaf emphasizes the rhetorical economy of these four clauses, reading them as a maximally compact rebuttal simultaneously addressing anthropomorphism, Trinitarian doctrine, and polytheist genealogies of deities—accomplishing in a single continuous argument what might otherwise require extended polemic. Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim record the statement that this surah "equals a third of the Qur'an," a report cited extensively in discussions of its theological density; reports also link its revelation to questions posed to the Prophet about God's lineage or nature, prompting this declaration of radical divine uniqueness and self-sufficiency (as-samad).

The Mu'awwidhatan, Al-Falaq and An-Nas, close the mushaf as paired surahs of refuge-seeking. Al-Falaq: "Say, I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak, from the evil of that which He created, and from the evil of darkness when it settles, and from the evil of the blowers in knots, and from the evil of an envier when he envies" (113:1–5). An-Nas: "Say, I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, the Sovereign of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the retreating whisperer—who whispers [evil] into the breasts of mankind—from among the jinn and mankind" (114:1–6). Hadith collections (Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, and others) report the Prophet's frequent recitation of these two surahs for protection (ruqyah), including narrations connected to an episode of sorcery reportedly worked against him; commentators note this connection with some caution given debate over the authenticity and interpretation of the relevant reports. Whatever the precise circumstances of their revelation, the two surahs function structurally as a closing frame for the entire Qur'anic text, moving from cosmic and natural evils (Al-Falaq) to psychological and interpersonal evil, specifically whispered temptation from both jinn and human sources (An-Nas).

Synthesis

Read as a whole, Juz' 'Amma presents a concentrated rehearsal of the earliest Qur'anic message: the reality and imminence of resurrection and judgment, argued cumulatively from the observable order of creation; vivid, almost cinematic renderings of cosmic dissolution and the moral bifurcation of humanity into the saved and the condemned; historical admonitions drawn from destroyed peoples ('Ad, Thamud, Pharaoh, the Companions of the Elephant); a persistent and often overlooked strand of social ethics condemning fraud, wealth-hoarding, and neglect of orphans and the poor; and a small but significant cluster of texts directly anchored in the Prophet's biography—his early hardship and reassurance (Ad-Duha, Ash-Sharh), the onset of revelation (Al-'Alaq), a moment of self-correction ('Abasa), confrontation with a named opponent (Al-Masad), and, near the juz's end, an intimation of his approaching death (An-Nasr). The juz' closes on the declarative simplicity of Al-Ikhlas and the protective invocations of the Mu'awwidhatan, bringing the Qur'an's textual arrangement full circle from cosmic argument to intimate petition. Modern scholarship, from Neuwirth's form-critical attention to these surahs as liturgical units to Sinai's stylistic dating, and Fazlur Rahman's insistence on their ethical substance, converges in treating this material not as a mere doctrinal appendix but as the rhetorical and theological foundation upon which the Qur'an's longer, later, more discursive legal and narrative surahs were subsequently built.